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THE SECRET OF VICTORIOUS LIVING

THE GOSPEL
OF
ST. JOHN

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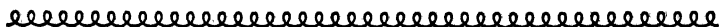
by

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

○

The Second Mile
The Assurance of Immortality
The Manhood of the Master
The Meaning of Prayer
The Meaning of Faith
The Meaning of Service
Christianity and Progress
Twelve Tests of Character
The Modern Use of the Bible
Adventurous Religion
A Pilgrimage to Palestine
As I See Religion
The Hope of the World

○



Sermons on Christianity Today

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK



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Foreword

A YEAR ago I published with misgiving my first volume of sermons, and now find myself, to my surprise, sending a second one to the press. For this the goodwill of my friends, both at the Riverside Church, New York, and in the radio audience across the continent, is accountable. To them I give my hearty thanks, and on them I roll the responsibility of having called out by their appreciation this second volume of addresses.

A special debt of gratitude I owe to my personal secretary, Miss Margaret Renton, who, beginning with the stenographic transcription of these sermons when they were first delivered, has with tireless patience labored in their preparation for the press.

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

September 1, 1934

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THE SECRET OF VICTORIOUS LIVING

*The Secret of Victorious
Living*

WHAT life in the long run does to us depends on what life finds in us. There, in a few words, is one of the most elemental and determining facts in human experience. Two men go down to the lower levels of a city, one a self-indulgent debauchee, the other a devoted Salvation Army officer. They see the same things, deal with the same people, are played on by the same circumstances, but how different is the result! One carries into that situation the spirit of a debauchee so that he catches filth from everything he touches, while the other carries the spirit of a savior so that he deepens his care for men, his pity for their weakness, his shame for their sin, his passion for their redemption. Not so much what life brings to us in her hands as what we bring to life in our spirits makes the difference between people.

Paul may well have had this truth in mind when he wrote to the Romans, "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good." If we omit the first part of that statement the remainder is incredible. All things by themselves do not work together for good and we may not pretend that they do. Paul, however, did not omit the first part. What he said is intimate and personal, addressed to us one by one. (Into any situation, if we bring one set of interior attitudes we will get the corresponding result, but if into the same situation we bring other attitudes we will come out somewhere else altogether. What happens to us from without does not determine the consequence. What happens to us from without pulls our triggers and explodes us; the consequence depends on what was in us to explode.)

Let me put this truth into my own language, Paul would say, and then you may translate it into your language if you wish to; only, do not miss the basic fact which I have tested

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out in life and know for certain: to them that love God, to them that carry that spirit into life, all things work together for good.

To one who feels an initial reluctance to believe this I commend the fact that this statement came straight out of Paul's life. It is a condensation of experience, not simply a venture of theory. How Paul grew, both in character and influence! His letters to the Thessalonians are good but his last letters to the Philippians and Ephesians, out of his final imprisonment, have height and depth, beauty and spaciousness not there at first. As for influence, at the beginning he was so distrusted by the Christian community that, had it not been for the good offices of Barnabas, he would have had no opportunity, but before he died he had laid the foundations of the churches across the Empire. Now, if at the end of that extraordinary life we ask what had been happening to Paul throughout the years, the answer is plain: all things had been happening to him. Worshiped as a god, stoned as a felon, shipwrecked three times, loved as a brother, hated as a heretic, imprisoned as a malefactor—all things had happened to him. Few men in history have earned by a life of hardship as much right as he had to speak and be listened to. All things had happened to him, and if in the end all things had amazingly worked together for good, the secret was inside Paul. What life did to him in the end depended on what life found in him.

Reluctant as we naturally are to apply so searching a principle to ourselves, we do in daily life see it operate. We can change any situation by changing our internal attitude toward it. Nearly fifty years ago my mother sent me to pick a quart of raspberries. I did not want to pick a quart of raspberries and I dragged reluctant feet to the berry patch in rebellion against an evil world where a small boy who wants to do something else has to pick raspberries. Then a new idea came: it would be fun to pick two quarts of raspberries and surprise the family. That changed everything. I had so interesting a time picking two quarts of raspberries, to the utter amazement of the household, that, although it happened

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nearly half a century ago, I never have forgotten it. But, alas, I often have forgotten the philosophy of it: what the circumstances and compulsions of life do to us depends on what they find in us.

As we face this truth, consider that here lies the realistic answer to the oft-repeated question, Is life worth living? How can one answer that in general? For millions of people life clearly is not worth living. Indeed, at this point some one here may wish to make a warm, protesting speech. Life may be worth living for a few, you say, the prosperous, the fortunate, who by heritage or achievement have been given the world's cushioned seats, but the ill-bested, the hard-put-to-it, the baffled, stricken, the cruelly handicapped—for millions of whipped and beaten men and women life is not worth living.

My friend, you are in so far right that the catastrophes of life can be appalling, and how some people stand up against the blows of ill fortune that land on them and the cruel billows of circumstance that roll over them one often does not understand, but on one matter of realistic fact your statement is mistaken. I challenge you on that. You draw the line through humankind with good fortune on one side and ill fortune on the other, and you imply that the people who find life abundantly worth living are merely or mainly on the fortunate side of the line. You are mistaken. From Jesus, poor, homeless, and crucified, or Epictetus, a slave and crippled, to some moderns we know, like Helen Keller, the personalities to whom life has been most worth living have been commonly not on the fortunate side of the line; they have not sat in the cushioned seats of the world.

Nobody ever *finds* life worth living. One always has to *make* it worth living. All the people to whom life has been abundantly worth living have made it so by an interior, creative, spiritual contribution of their own, and such people commonly are not in fortunate circumstance. The ultimate testimony that a man's life is not worth living is, of course, that he kills himself. In these days one does not have to listen long, even in the circle of one's friends, to hear de-

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fenses of suicide. So many millions of people have lives that are not worth going on with, some say, why shouldn't they open the door themselves and escape? One who so speaks is thinking that it is the vast depressed masses of mankind who want to commit suicide. Upon the contrary, it is not so much the ill-bested as the well-to-do who destroy themselves. We have recently had put into our hands the most thoroughgoing statistical study of this matter ever made. "Prosperity," it reads, "often brings suicide in its train. The poor beggar holds on to life while the millionaire whose fortune has collapsed destroys himself." When that happens, the trouble is precisely where Paul located it, inside the man.

In this church a few Sundays ago, as the service closed, one man was heard to say in a low voice to his neighbor, "Well, I am not going to keep that suicide pact." I wonder whether he did have a suicide pact and, if so, who he was? Some beaten victim of circumstance? I venture not. All the statistical probabilities are against that. Trouble? Yes, the same kind of trouble that millions of people are magnificently meeting with something inside them that Paul called the love of God. The chances are that the failure of that man was inside. So the editor of the *New York Herald Tribune* said about a leading newspaper artist who killed himself some time since: he "was a successful artist, with editors eager to snatch the paper from beneath his pencil, but he found life emptier than do the hungry men on the bread-lines." You see, my friend, we are compelled by the facts to draw that line of yours in another place altogether. Some people who find life worth living are fortunate, some are unfortunate, but all of them have something inside of them.

At this point we commonly misunderstand persons who are so happy and seem so fortunate that, when exuberantly they tell us that life is worth living, we rebel and say, Of course it is to you; what do you know about trouble? I always felt that way about William James of Harvard. He was so eager about life, so optimistic; he was so sure of himself when he challenged us to believe in life, that I used to wonder how much he knew about life in the raw. When William James

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died and Mrs. James asked Dr. George A. Gordon to officiate at the funeral, she wrote this: "I want you to officiate at the funeral as one of William's friends and also as a man of faith. That is what he was; I want no hesitation or diluted utterance at William's funeral." One admires a man whose wife can talk about him like that and yet I wondered how much he knew about life in the raw. How astounding it was, then, to learn from his published letters about those long periods of melancholia in his young manhood, month after month, with life utterly meaningless and empty, moods so desperate that his son has omitted some of the most depressed expressions of them. I have been surprised before by biographies of men I thought I knew but never more so than when in letters of William James I ran on phrases like this, "All last winter, for instance, when I was on the continual verge of suicide." My word! *That* from William James! So, his radiance was a victory. He did not find life worth living; he made it worth living. When in his essay on "Is Life Worth Living?" he says, "My final appeal is to nothing more recondite than religious faith," he meant that. That was William James, the man, rediscovering after nearly two thousand years what Paul found, that if all things are to work together for good in any man's life he must have within him a spiritual contribution of personal religion, of creative faith.

Is life worth living? Most people seem to think *that* a question about the cosmos. No, my friends, that is a question about the inside attitude of you and me.

Throughout this sermon I shall talk about this inward matter. In consequence, some may go out saying that I am an individualist and am not thinking about social questions. That is not true, but day after day I meet people who never will make any contribution to social questions until they first make this conquest of their own lives. Consider even President Roosevelt's case. If ever he succeeds in mastering the tragic situations which socially face this nation, the victory will go back to qualities of mind and character achieved when he mastered the personal tragedy which fell on him.

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I *am* thinking of social questions and of young men and women here who might contribute to their answering but who never will unless first of all, deep within themselves, they learn how to make all things work together for good.

Consider also that we have here a practical answer to the baffling question whether we possess real freedom to control our lives. Determinism and free will, fate and freedom, have been endlessly debated, but the days come in individual experience and in social life when that question presses up out of theoretical debate into practical urgency. That time is on us now. All things are happening to some of us and it does make a difference whether we think of ourselves as free, creative personalities, who can make all things work together for good, or as mere victims of fate.

Recently I had a letter from one of my radio auditors, a business man, apparently with no academic or theoretical interests, but wishing this question answered: Was he a thing mechanistically predetermined or was he a creative person who might control his life and circumstance? He wanted to know, and as one felt his urgency one saw that life had him in a corner where it was important to know. Life has many of us in that corner and whenever our minds face such a situation they begin tricking us. For when we are making a success and everything is going fortunately, we tend to believe in freedom and to think ourselves responsible actors, but when we are failing and desperate difficulties oppress us, we tend to think that we are being preyed upon by fate and that life is victimizing us. When we enjoy prosperity, we are doing it; when we suffer adversity, something is being done to us. So, as George Eliot said, our doctrines become names for our feelings. One, therefore, can observe a rhythm in individual life and in the history of thought—days of prosperity accompanied by belief in freedom; days of difficulty accompanied by belief in fate.

At no time in a man's life, however, does he so deeply need to believe that he is a free, creative person as when he is in trouble. In that situation a life like Paul's shines. Put him in a difficult place, as in prison with the Prætorian guard

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over him, and listen as he writes to his friends in Philippi, "I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel." Put him in a desperate place and he still knows that he is free to do something about it. He can make almost anything work together for good.

This morning I am not interested in the theoretical debate between determinism and freedom but, for all that, I am confident about the debate's outcome. Underline this: *the evolution of life has been a progressive development of free initiative*. Throw a boomerang and it will come back to you; that is a mechanical process. Loose a homing pigeon a thousand miles from home and it will return; that is a mechanical process plus something else. Let a Prodigal Son go into the far country and discover what it is like there and he may come back to you. Now we cannot by any possibility reduce that personal experience to the principle of the boomerang. The spiritual response of the prodigal is not explicable in merely mechanistic terms. Something new is there—freedom of initiative and choice. Evolution from things, through animals, to human personality has involved a development of free initiative.

What we are thinking about, however, concerns not so much the theory as the practical issue of the matter. Let us, therefore, put the case in terms of biography. Fairly early in his career, Beethoven felt the darkening shadows of his inevitable deafness. At first he was in despair. Why not? "What a sorrowful life I must now live," he wrote; "How happy would I be if my hearing were completely restored . . . but as it is I must draw back from everything, and the most beautiful years of my life will take wings without accomplishing all the promise of my talent and my powers!" So it looked and, what is more, so it would have turned out, had it not been for something else inside Beethoven. "There is no greater joy for me than to pursue and produce my art," he wrote in another letter; "Oh, if I were only rid of this affliction I could embrace the world! . . . I will seize fate by the throat; most assuredly it shall not get me wholly

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down—oh, it is so beautiful to live life a thousand-fold.” In the face of that, how can a man believe in mechanistic determinism? No! So long as living personalities can so stand against antagonistic circumstance, saying, “I will seize fate by the throat,” and then *doing* it, mechanistic determinism is incredible. Then, with awe, in Beethoven’s case as in Paul’s, one reads the consequence. One biographer, himself a musician, puts it thus: “We are eternal debtors to his deafness. It is doubtful if such lofty music could have been created except as self-compensation for some such affliction, and in the utter isolation which that affliction brought about.” So Beethoven made all things work together for good.

This ought to dig deep into some one here. Some one certainly is here who needs it. Stop being a fatalist. When we bounce a ball against a wall it returns in a predetermined direction; that is mechanistic reaction. But we do not need to behave like that. When life puts something up to us we need not *react*; we can *respond*. That is different. That takes our spiritual contribution in. If some one here is saying, I am in a desperately difficult place, I do not doubt you. Day after day I see people in desperately difficult places, but if some one else were in that same place, making response, the result would be different.

What do you suppose Paul had in mind when he described that response as loving God? Certainly he was not thinking of devotion to any far-off deity. He was walking in the deeper levels of the New Testament—“God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him”; “that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.” He was thinking of the inner deeps of personal religion, where faith gives life meaning and purpose, where character is unified and organized, integrated and directed, so that we find things worth living for and adequate resources to live by, and at last can say with Browning, “Who keeps one end in view makes all things serve.” In our capacity to make that spiritual response to life our freedom lies.

Finally, in this truth lies the practical answer to one of life’s most puzzling facts—its appalling impartiality. Some

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here must have been holding in their minds another picture of the world altogether than the one I have been presenting. They see the appalling impartiality of life. So Ecclesiastes, the most pessimistic book in the Old Testament, puts it: "All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked. . . . This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one event unto all." So it looks. Birth and death, joy and sorrow, sickness and health, love and loss, happiness and tragedy—no respecters of persons—come to each regardless of his character and his response. All things come alike to all.

On Calvary three crosses stood; on one a thief profane and blasphemous, on another a thief ashamed and penitent, on the third the Christ. Strange world where three characters so diverse hang on the same Calvary! All things come alike to all. This world is not run right, a man says. A shipwreck drowns in indiscriminate ruin good and evil alike; when a hurricane wrecks a village the churches and the schools fare no better than the brothels; an economic disaster engulfs the honest man and the crook, and death on the same day falls on some knightly servant of the common good and on some old philanderer who has dragged his miserable life across fourscore years. All things come alike to all.

I wonder whether Paul had in mind that statement of Ecclesiastes when he hurled his challenge back, "To them that love God all things work together for good." In one sense they both are true. As Jesus said in his parable, one man builds a house on sand and another on rock and then the same thing happens to both—the rains descend and the floods come and the winds blow. At that stage Ecclesiastes is correct: all things come alike to all. But in the end it is not correct. In the end one house has gone. Things do not come *out* alike to all. Some souls go to pieces; some souls have something in them so that all things work together for good.

No preacher who takes his work earnestly can look out over congregations like this without pondering this matter. We never will all be together on earth again. When we go from here today, like leaves driven by the winds, fortune

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will scatter us afar, and, as imaginatively we look down the years and ask what will happen to us, the answer is clear: all things will happen to us—life and death, joy and sorrow, romance and loss, friendship and bereavement, happiness and tragedy—all things. And while, to be sure, since each of us must come to journey's end, some circumstances will be final, for the most part what all things do to us will depend on what they find in us.

The High Uses of Trouble

ONE of the most natural, most common, and most disastrous attitudes toward life is a negative reaction to trouble. Despite the accumulated experience of the ages and the insights of the seers, many think of an untroubled life as the ideal and of trouble, therefore, as an intruder to be resented, to be removed if possible, and, if not, to be endured. We shall try to do justice to such truth as this natural, popular, and shallow idea contains, but surely it is shallow.

For one thing, each of us must know some person upon whom this kind of judgment could be passed: ~~he never will get out of him all that is in him until he faces trouble~~; his life has been too safe and easy; he never has confronted calamity and so been waked up and shaken up and had the deeper levels of his power released. Even in this sorely distracted world, where certainly there seems to be trouble enough, that is true of some people. No supreme artist ever reached the climax of his power until there was added the final touch of poignancy from the personal experience of grief. Tribulation, as the etymology of the word suggests, is ~~thrashing~~, and some fine grain of the spirit, in great music, great poetry, great art, as well as great character, would have been impossible without that painful experience.

Indeed, on the wider stage of history the import of this truth at times is clear. Marie Antoinette added the final stroke of levity and folly which ruined the old régime and brought on the bloody terrors of the Revolution. A silly, frivolous girl, grace and charm personified, she flitted amid the pleasures of Versailles or fooled with her favorites at the Little Trianon. But when at last the Revolution broke and all her world of tinsel playthings came collapsing down and she faced calamity and death, she turned out to be a

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strong, courageous woman. Character had been underneath there all the time. Versailles never had released her depths. It took catastrophe to bring them forth. "Tribulation," she said in one of her later letters, "first makes one realize what one is." Quite so! "Hitherto," says her biographer, "she had played with life and had never wrestled with it; but now, in face of so formidable a challenge, her energies answered the call to arms." She who had lived like a fool came to her end like a queen, so that sometimes one wonders what would have happened in history if Marie Antoinette had faced trouble sooner and become a woman before it was too late.

Adversity, then, far from being a mere nuisance or cruelty, is one of the constituent elements in all great living, to be finely used. When a man with that truth in mind turns to his own experience, how can he fail to see the application? When you and I have faced a personal calamity and have handled it well, we have always added a new dimension to our character.

This morning, therefore, in a very troubled time, we are asking ourselves what adversity is doing to us one by one. If some one says that our first business is not to ask that question but to get rid of trouble, reorganize our social life so as to throw off this terrific incidence of misfortune and give men a decent chance to be happy, I answer: You have heard that here many a time and will hear it yet again. But when we have gotten rid of all the trouble we can get rid of, there will be plenty left. Adversity is a constant and constituent element of human life upon this planet. What, then, if trouble is one of the most shining instruments which existence puts into our hands, without the fine use of which nothing beautiful ever has been done in human character, not merely an accident but an opportunity, not simply a misfortune to be endured but a new dimension in human experience fit for splendid uses?

Remember Paul, who knew trouble if ever a man did, writing to his Roman friends, "We also rejoice in our tribulations," or, as Dr. Moffatt translates it, "We triumph even in our troubles." That is an essential element in the Chris-

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ian gospel and he who does not understand it is farther off from being Christian than a man who doubts a formal creed.

Consider for one thing that trouble can be finely used to call out our powers. Generally we succeed in getting out of ourselves no more than life demands. Many of us here would say that whatever growth we have achieved in available resources of character or abilities of mind has come primarily from undertaking tasks and assuming responsibilities which seemed at first too much for us but which we diligently tried to live up to. We placed ourselves, that is, in situations which demanded of us more than ever had been called out before and, so doing, we sometimes have looked at ourselves in surprise as though to say, I never dreamed that you had *that* in you until life called for it.

Now, of all experiences which thus elicit in us unexpected attributes and powers, nothing is more astounding in its consequence than trouble when it is well handled. Hardship does demand of us dimensions and depths which fair weather never asks for, and when it is well used its fruit is the most exquisite, I think, that human history records.

Lest any one should think that in saying this we are underestimating the appalling nature of some human suffering, let us take our illustration from a hopeless tragedy. In all English speech there are few things more moving than the letter written by Captain Scott, freezing and starving to death in the Antarctic blizzards, to his friend Sir James Barrie. You will remember some of the sentences from the message of the dying man. "Goodbye," he wrote; "I am not at all afraid of the end, but sad to miss many a humble pleasure which I had planned for the future. . . . We are in a desperate state, feet frozen, &c. No fuel and a long way from food, but it would do your heart good to be in our tent, to hear our songs and the cheery conversation. . . . *Later.*—We are very near the end, but have not and will not lose our good cheer. . . . We did intend to finish ourselves when things proved like this, but we have decided to die naturally in the track. . . . I never met a man in my life whom I admired and loved more than you, but I never could show you how

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much your friendship meant to me, for you had much to give and I nothing."

You see, trouble asked for something in him that fair weather never asks for, and got it. Here, then, is the real tragedy with us, not that we suffer but that in a world where suffering is the common human lot, sure to come in one form or another to every son and daughter of man, we take toward it merely a negative and defensive attitude, get out of it such habits as resentfulness and self-pity, do not hear it calling with creative voice for those faculties and attributes which ease never asks for and no comfortable happiness ever can produce. If our vocabulary did not have in it words like 'trouble,' 'adversity,' 'calamity,' 'grief,' our vocabulary by no possibility could have in it words like 'bravery,' 'fortitude,' 'patience,' 'self-sacrifice.' He who knows no hardship will know no hardihood. He who faces no calamity will need no courage. Mysterious though it is, the characteristics in human nature which we love best grow in a soil with a strong admixture of trouble.

Do not misunderstand me in this. I am not saying that trouble alone brings out our best. I am saying that if we have within us anything remotely approaching the spirit of Christ, we can *make* trouble bring out our best. Trouble by itself is neutral. It can do almost anything to a man. It can make him bitter and resentful. It can make him hard and cruel. It can plunge his life into despair and wreck his faith on futility. But trouble does that only to people who take a negative attitude toward it and let it do that to them. There are others—O my soul, the glory of the race!—upon whom trouble fell as cruelly as on other men, yet who had in them something so creative that their calamity became their opportunity. Those who knew them best looked on them in amazement, saying, We never guessed they had *that* in them until trouble called for it.

Again, consider that trouble can be used to deepen our sympathy and intensify our usefulness. After all, it takes adversity to understand adversity and history has some fine samples of hardship so highly used. One of the most con-

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siderable influences in the humanitarian movement of the nineteenth century, which abolished debtors' prisons, improved conditions of labor, and cleansed the English schools of their worst barbarities, was Charles Dickens. He was not simply a marvelous story-teller; he was an effective reformer. How vividly he described the abominations of his time, and with what indignation he assailed them! To be sure! He had suffered from them himself. Micawber was his father. His father had been in a debtors' prison. As a young boy, crushed with shame and crippled with poverty, Dickens had crept up to the barbarous place day after day, to visit his sire. When ten years old he worked long hours for a pittance, pasting labels on bottles in a blacking factory, and in his own person he endured the stupid cruelties of the old pedagogy. Then he rose above his adversity, transmuted by magic its lead into gold, made of it deep insight, profound understanding, keen sympathy, widespread public service. That is trouble finely used.

It is nonsense to call an untroubled life the ideal. What can an untroubled life know about living? How can that help anybody?

Robert Louis Stevenson once saw a man abusing a dog and his sympathy and indignation were called out. When the man said that it was his dog and that he would do what he pleased with it, Stevenson blazed back, "It's not your dog. It's God's dog, and I'm here to protect it." If that were all you knew about Stevenson, what more could you guess? You might safely guess that he had been himself a sufferer. Indeed he had, and he could not see a dog suffer without entering into its misery.

Far from being a merely individual matter, this truth runs deep into our present social situation. Sometimes when one thinks of the millions of our fellow citizens enduring such heart-breaking poverty as only those who suffer it can fully know and only those who live at the human end of this depression can dimly imagine, and when, on the other side, one thinks of privileged people like ourselves, upon whom the greatest cruelties of this calamity have not fallen,

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one hears an unspoken complaint from the unprivileged to the privileged:

You cannot understand us. What can you know about us? Have you ever walked the streets asking for work and not finding it? Have you ever been bitterly hungry and lacked food? When have you seen your children without bread or stripped, one by one, of their dreams of education and their hopes of useful work, while you, desperately helpless, looked on and could do nothing? No, you cannot understand us. You never have looked at this appalling contrast between plenty and poverty from the side of poverty and you do not really know the world's cruelty and the bitterness of being disinherited. How can you comprehend what this depression means in terms of human tragedy?

If we have any care for the future of our nation, we had better listen to that complaint. Let every man say to his own soul: If you have had any experience with trouble, use it now. Let it carry you out beyond the barricades which too commonly shut our understanding in, and make for you roads of insight into the life of the people. Translate anything you know about trouble into such constructive care for individuals and for the social welfare that somebody will have cause to thank God that once you yourself faced adversity, so that you can understand.

Again, consider that trouble finely used can serve our intellects as well as our characters and can cleanse us of some dangerous illusions. In particular, it ought to cleanse us of the vain illusion that life is always just, or that we ought to expect it to be just, to the individual. Despite the accumulated experience of ages, one continually meets people complaining because life is not just to them, and one sees that they actually have expected that it would be just to them, that they would be paid a reward for their goodness on Saturday night, and now they are resentful because, instead, life has turned out to be terribly unjust.

Where can people so bewitched have been living, or what books can they have read? Not the Bible. Was life just to Jesus? Was the cross just? When he set his face steadfastly

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to go up to Jerusalem to be crucified, was he expecting justice? Or those predecessors of his in handling calamity, concerning whom the New Testament says that the world was not worthy of them, who were sawn asunder, slain with the sword, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—was the world just to them? Almost the beginning of wisdom is to give up the idea and surrender the expectation that life will be just to you.

Indeed, I suspect that it is much better that life should not be immediately just to the individual. Suppose that every time we did a good deed life should pay us a corresponding amount of happiness so that we received our wages for goodness on a Saturday, so much good fortune for so much good conduct; would not our goodness speedily degenerate into mere prudent bargaining? Drop in so much right behavior and take out so much pleasure! Where, then, would be the moral heroes of the race who served honor in scorn of consequence? They did not expect to be paid upon a Saturday. They chose right for right's sake alone, saying with Esther, "If I perish, I perish." How stripped and bare would be our human story with such souls gone, who poured out service without asking pay, drank their hemlock, bore their cross, expected no justice for themselves! No, the beginning of great character, like the beginning of deep wisdom, lies in renouncing the expectation that life will be just. At any rate, without that there is no possibility of being a disciple of Jesus—"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

In our time there can have been few men who saw more trouble, looked on it more intimately, felt it more deeply than Cardinal Mercier, and of all his difficult days, I suspect, none could have been harder to endure than the one in Rome when news reached him of the burning of Louvain and the subsequent bombardment of Malines—the nave of his own cathedral a mass of débris, his home torn by shells, one-sixth of Louvain gone, the priceless books of the library burned, and already the dead bodies of his peaceful students

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being cremated. Now, Cardinal Mercier was no quiet pool. He had in him tremendous capacities for resentment and indignation, and those who were with him say that in the first few minutes of his misery the complaints rose deep out of his wretchedness. "Why all this sorrow, Lord? My God, my God, hast thou forsaken us?" Then, they say, his eyes fell on the crucifix and the stormy man grew still as though once more the Christ had calmed a tempest, and they heard him say, "A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord. We will rebuild!"

In the presence of a scene like that how petty we appear, claiming that life must be just to us, our little egos screaming with resentment when it is not. No, expect trouble. Take it in your stride. Never ask of life that you be spared it. Ask that when, in due season, beyond your power to prevent, it comes, you may handle it well. And sometimes, when there are tasks to be done which will cost the sacrifice of things you love and the bearing of burdens you hate, walk straight into trouble; deliberately choose it. Of all the shining instruments that life put into the hands of Jesus with which to change the world, nothing remotely compared with the cross.

Finally, trouble nobly used can open up within us deep interior resources of spiritual power. Listen to Cardinal Mercier himself: "Suffering," he wrote, "accepted and vanquished, . . . will give you a serenity which may well prove the most exquisite fruit of your life." That is a strange thing. Suffering bring out serenity? That, certainly, is not what most of us get from suffering. We get warning from it, trouble waved like a red lantern, disturbing us with the knowledge that there is something wrong. We get resentment out of it, rebellion against an unkind fate. We fall into self-pity because of it, and are desperately sorry for ourselves. What manner of man is this, then, who, knowing trouble so deeply, could say that serenity, the most exquisite fruit of a man's life, can come from it?

Yet, strange as this seems, we all must have seen it happen. Here in this congregation more than once we have watched the amazing miracle. Souls, who loved life as much as you

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and I do, stood face to face with towering and, it may be, fatal adversity, and, accepting it, releasing within themselves those hidden springs which wash the bitterness out of it, they moved into a deep serenity which gave to old phrases like "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," fresh meaning. They triumphed in their troubles.

Moreover, it is not so difficult to understand their secret. Many things that life asks of us we can achieve easily by the exercise of determination and energy. Do this! says life, and we blow upon our hands and do it. So, day after day, the depths of us go uncalled for, and busyness, energy, activity suffice for our tasks. Many young people are like that. They feel quite adequate for life. Like Marie Antoinette, their Versailles has not asked them for anything they could not easily find upon the surface of their lives. What is all this talk, they think, about the need of God and prayer and the deep resources of the soul?

Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in thy presence will prevail to make—
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parchèd grounds refresh, as with a shower!

What does that mean? they say. Half the things, they think, which the preachers say are crazy, and as for the hymns they sing in church——!

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.

What does that mean? they wonder.

Not all young people are like that but many are, and most of us, I suspect, at some time in youth felt the same way. For nothing becomes real to us till it is needed. If we did not need food so much it would not be so significant for us. It is only when life faces a place where there is no going on without new resources that new resources become real to us. So trouble is one of the supreme teachers of the soul. For what-

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ever else in life we may succeed in handling by personal effort, we will not handle adversity with so facile a technique. When adversity comes, a soul true to itself builds new dimensions—not so much by activity as by receptivity, not so much by new branches of effort as by new roots of faith, not so much by strenuousness as by serenity. So the Cardinal was right. And some people who have lived in that spirit, simply by being what they are, have helped us more than all the busy folks who serve us with their hands—they triumphed in their troubles.

The Cure of Disillusionment

ONE of the most devastating experiences in human life is disillusionment. Of course there are real illusions, to be disillusioned of which is healthy, but we are using the word in its popular sense. Everywhere about us are people to whom great faiths have become mere fantasies, great hopes mere castles in Spain, great social ideals mirages without substance; and whatever excellence and beauty the soul possesses is blighted when such disillusionment arrives.

Real faith in God is withered by it. To have an object of your love, who has incarnated for you life's goodness and beauty, let you down, betray your confidence until all that seemed most solid and trustworthy collapses and you feel that never again can you believe in anything or anybody—that is a shorter road to loss of real faith in God than any theoretical argument can ever be.

Integrity of character goes down before disillusionment. It takes two things to bowl over a great tree—a heavy wind outside and decay inside. Now, disillusionment is an inward, spiritual decay, and much of the moral wreckage which seems to be caused by storms of passion or greed never would have taken place if it had not been for an inner cynicism, a disgust with life's futility, an inability to see sense in it. A man in that mood is an easy mark for the next high wind.

If disillusionment does this for the individual, what shall we say about a disillusioned generation? Wherever we look we see people baffled with disgust and disappointment, so that at times the world seems like a whispering gallery filled with the echoes of many souls crying that life has failed them.

The popular appeal of materialistic philosophies, which say with Bertrand Russell that all man's achievements will finally be ruined by the "trampling march of unconscious power,"

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lies in the fact that they are the theoretical formulations of a prevalent disillusionment. The appalling increase in suicides, so that one American father, a leading intellectual whose son has killed himself in college, cries out for some way of recovering faith in life, is one consequence of widespread disillusionment. Why these desertions from great causes, like internationalism, in which the deserters once believed? Tired liberals have become disillusioned. And why these moods of ours when, picking up the morning paper, we wish we could run away from this crazy world? Within ourselves we know that we are living in a disillusioned era.

Moreover, it is not difficult to see the reason. No generation in history, I suspect, ever envisioned greater social achievements or made heavier sacrifices to win them than the Western world has in the last twenty years. Let us say at least *that* for ourselves! We have had commanding social hopes and we have made vast sacrifices. You younger people, who were not old enough to catch the feeling of the Great War when it was here, will not understand that as we elders do. The war, dreadful as it was, saw an outpouring of sacrificial devotion such as seldom in all history has lifted multitudes of ordinary men and women to heroic heights of self-forgetfulness.

An American visitor had a conference with Marshal Joffre on the French front, the most impressive moment of which, so he told me, was when the Marshal drew from the pocket of his tunic a letter which had been written by a French mother whose son was in Canada: "My dear boy, you will be grieved to learn that your two brothers have been killed. Their country needed them and they gave everything they had to save her. Your country needs you, and while I am not going to suggest that you return to fight for France, if you do not return at once, *never come.*"

We elders recall that spirit, the heights to which it rose, the incredible possibilities of devotion it revealed, and we remember, too, how much of that sacrifice was idealized as service for mankind—war to end war and make the world safe

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for democracy. Youth now looks back with horror, as we do, on the world-wide carnage—its heroisms but glancing sunlight on a sea of blood and tears. But we remember, also, how high the hope rose of a better world, how marvelous the dream seemed of a League of Nations and a World Court, how sure we were that out of the appalling travail endless blessing would be born for all mankind.

Of course we are living in a disillusioned generation!

Surely it is worth something candidly to recognize this situation, get one's eye clearly on it, and then talk with as much sense as we can achieve about the problem it presents.

In particular, if a Christian minister has no message on this subject, he is denying his function. Christianity won its first great victory over a disillusioned civilization. "When we ask," writes one scholar, "what idea of the world-process was held by the thinkers and teachers of Greco-Roman society, we find that they all thought of it as, in one way or another, a vain eternal recurrence, leading nowhere." Into that disenchanted era Christianity went and, if we may believe the testimony of Clement of Alexandria in the second century, Christ altered the complexion of men's minds. Said Clement, "He hath changed sunset into sunrise." Once more, today, Christianity faces a disillusioned civilization. What have we to say?

In the first place, some of us are not disillusioned, because in our sane moments we are sure that much disillusionment is emotional self-indulgence not intellectually justified. In retrospect, for example, we now can see the fair beginning of the French Revolution, promising liberty, equality, fraternity, and we can see its dismal, horrifying course with the tumbrils rumbling through the city streets and the bloody guillotine, after which, to the discouragement of liberals, came Napoleon's tyranny. We can understand a man like Wordsworth, at the Revolution's start lifted to great heights of enthusiastic expectancy and at the Revolution's close, in Bonaparte's régime, plunged into dejection. He felt with dismay

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that the French Revolution had let his generation down, and he wrote :

. . . I lost
All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
Yielded up moral questions in despair.

That is a perfect picture of a disillusioned man. But, seen now in retrospect, that collapsed and dilapidated mood of Wordsworth was emotional self-indulgence not intellectually justified. As a matter of fact, he was nearer right in his first idealism than in his last dejection. His modern biographers have to apologize for his later Toryism. Mankind did turn a corner of the street in the French Revolution.

By and large, that is a true picture of typical historic fact. The idealists who have believed in such causes as religious liberty, public education, freedom of scientific research, and have kept on believing in them even when their generation seemed to fail them, have been nearer right than the cynics have ever been.

On that point we are being tried again in our day. I am not thinking now of individuals hard hit by the present crisis, unemployed, it may be, who for months have walked these city streets and found no work. If such are here I am not blaming you for being downcast and emotionally disheveled. I am thinking rather of the many who, in general, have given up their social hopes. Multitudes have had, as it were, nervous prostration. The chaos is so bewildering, the world seems so crazy, that their nerves have cracked. And, as happens in nervous prostration, they have turned most against the things that most they loved. Our ideals have failed us, they say ; our great faiths and hopes have turned out fantasies that lured us to sacrifice and then let us down ; this is a crazy world. Surely, *that* is emotional self-indulgence.

The fact that desperate trouble falls on multitudes does not indicate that the world is crazy. But what if a man could break all the laws of health and yet be healthy, break all the moral laws and still be loved and trusted—would not that

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indicate a crazy world? Well, our Western civilization has broken all laws of social health, transgressed the principles of a civilized society, and the fact that in consequence we are now in trouble does not indicate that the world is crazy but, rather, that the foundations of the world are laid in moral law so that whatsoever a civilization soweth, that shall it also reap.

Two kinds of experience make God real to us. Beauty does it. There are natural sights the eyes can see and harmonies the ears can hear in which the spiritual world becomes convincingly real, and there are persons also who are beautiful, as though an artist had made their characters with balance and symmetry and radiant color, in whose presence one may not deny the reality of the divine. But another kind of experience also makes God real to me—not beauty but trouble—desperate trouble, where men and nations who sow the wind now reap the whirlwind, so that one looking on sees that this is not a crazy world, that—alas for us!—it is very law-abiding.

When one sees a city like this, whose people have built with brick and stone until it is the amazement of the world, have made money until history has no parallel to our wealth, and yet who, generation after generation, have confided the city's government to a notorious organization of public plunderers, and when one sees that in consequence trouble now falls with cruel impact upon the lives and homes of the citizens, one has no reason for disillusionment and cynicism. What else would you expect in God's world but such moral consequence? If any city so long governed by Tammany could possibly be prosperous and happy, it would be a crazy world.

Or when one sees a civilization thinking, as we did, that by war we could end war, that by war we could make the world safe for democracy, pouring out slaughter as from a salt and boiling caldron to make our gardens fruitful, and when now in consequence we have no lovely fruitage but destitution and dismay, there is no reason to be disillusioned. It would be a crazy world if war could possibly produce the spiritual consequence we madly expected from it.

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This, then, is the first matter: we had better quit emotionally calling the world crazy when *we* are crazy and the world is perilously law-abiding. A good deal of our disillusionment is not the hard-headed realism that it thinks it is; it is intellectually unjustified, emotional self-indulgence.

Another fact prevents some of us from being disillusioned: we keep hearing calls for help. A time like this says two things to a man's soul. First it says, This is a disappointing era, but then it says, I tremendously need *you*. Probably the most appealing motive which can play on human life is thus to be needed, to be called for. The stimulus of being banked on is very powerful. When out of a critical day like this the call for help lays hold upon a man and he rises up to meet it, he cannot be disillusioned. We never yet saw anybody answering a call for help over whom disillusionment had power.

The pity is that this sense of being individually needed and individually called for, which was so real in war, grows dim in peace. An article in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1917, when we were entering the war, said this: "The greatness of a whole nation is so inextricably bound up with its individuals that I beg again each one of you now to say to himself or herself, 'This means *me*. It means me and *my* life, *my* best self, *my* highest ideals, if the magnificent opportunities of the times are to be realized.'" How we did rise in answer to such calls in war time! But now, as we watch some of our friends, we see that they are hearing another kind of voice out of this chaotic crisis, so that they walk about, collapsed in spirit and discouraged in mind. And if some of us are not joining them it is because we still hear that cry for help which makes a man's soul say to itself: This means *me*, it means me and *my* life.

To be sure, the individual often seems helpless, but that is no answer to our proposition. In a new biography of Whittier we learn that he was much impressed by a tale narrated by his father, that when an Indian tribe went on a drunken debauch, invariably one Indian was selected to stay sober. Even one Indian can do *that*. When all the tribe is drunk he can stay sober. So, when the crowd goes mad and

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crashes through the moral standards on which a decent society depends, this Indian proposes to stay sober. When in panic men cry, Democracy is dead and the liberties our fathers fought for must be surrendered to fascism, this Indian proposes to stay sober. When fear grows contagious and men say, We cannot build a decent economic life, or hysteria sweeps the nation and the mob cries for war, this Indian is going to stay sober. Even one Indian can do that and, as we know, instead of one, there are multitudes of us who could do that with saving effect.

Much of our disillusionment springs from self-pity. We feel sorry for ourselves so that we do not hear from others the call for help. Life is not fair to me, we say; life is not just to the individual. To which I answer, Of course life is not just to the individual. The scales of God come level in the end, but seldom within an individual's lifetime. Not since the day Christ was crucified has Christianity been able to teach that life is just to the individual. Christian faith, however, has done something else. A friend of mine was terribly stricken with infantile paralysis in youth. Some one, sympathizing, said to her, "Affliction does so color the life!" "Yes," she said quietly, "and I propose to choose the color." *There* was a Christian rising above self-pity and disillusionment.

This generation does need *you*. This troubled time is not the end of mankind's road. Humanity has greater days ahead of it than the wildest visionary pictures. We have now in our possession powers which would enable us to reduce the whole business of supplying mankind's material needs to a few hours' work per man per day. It is crazy to suppose that because we are muffing the ball now we never will find the way to handle it.

The disillusioned, however, will not find the way. No, nor any way to anything! The disillusioned are civilization's total loss. They have pitied themselves so much they have not heard the call for help.

Again, some of us are not disillusioned because we see that a man, professing to believe in a social cause, must give it a long-term faith. We cannot expect to get great business

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carried through on a short haul. If we do, we are living under an illusion and had better be disillusioned. The cynics, who sit in the seat of the scornful and poison the air with their deprecations of human life, are not the realists they think they are. Half the time they are men who flared once like tinder with fine enthusiasm about a worth-while cause, saying to themselves, We will blow upon our hands and get this done tomorrow, but then, discovering to their dismay that it was not done tomorrow nor the next tomorrow nor the next, they now clothe themselves in solemn gloom, saying, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Jesus knew the kind. "Straightway," he said, "it sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away." Such persons are capable of a short-term, but not a long-term faith.

To be sure, one sympathizes with them. It is not easy to say about a social cause that it may take a thousand years to bring it to its goal but that, nevertheless, we will live for it now and, if need be, die for it. That is a great deal to ask of human nature. What men said about God in Isaiah's time they are saying yet: "Let him make speed, let him hasten his work, that we may see it." That is very human. So, when we make a swift stroke to get a good thing done—a prohibitory law to stop drink, a League of Nations to stop war, an Economic Conference to stabilize currency, a Disarmament Conference to reduce the engines of mutual destruction, a Council on Faith and Order to unify the church, and little or nothing comes of it, we are easily disillusioned. We get the immediate implement which we enthusiastically have wanted and then it lets us down. What is the use? we say.

Indeed, if you wish a text for this sermon, here is one clothed in Oriental imagery: "The twilight that I desired hath been turned into trembling unto me." It comes out of the blistering heat of the Euphrates Valley where not noon-time, as with us, but twilight was the climax of the day. Here, then, was a disillusioned man: he had lived through the long day's heat, dreaming of the loveliness of evening,

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and now "the twilight that I desired hath been turned into trembling unto me."

While that is found in the twenty-first chapter of Isaiah, some scholars say that it was written by a disillusioned Jew near the end of the Babylonian Exile. For two generations the exiles had borne their cruel humiliation, dreaming of the time when Babylon should fall and release should come. And now Babylon was falling. The armies of Cyrus the Persian were crashing down from the north. On every side were signs of the victory they had prayed for. But the chaos was so great, the tumult so bewildering, the responsibilities of leadership so difficult, that this disillusioned Jew was terrified by the very thing he long had wanted: "The twilight that I desired hath been turned into trembling unto me."

He needed a long-term faith. You see, the Jews did get back from the Exile. They did rebuild Jerusalem. The spiritual contribution of Judaism was incalculably elevated. And out of what they did, at the long last, came Jesus to sway the world with the greatest spiritual influence in history. The only realists have been idealists with long-term faiths.

In this generation, also, a man should have causes with reference to which he nails the flag to the mast and refuses to agree that a lost battle means a lost war. Prohibition may fail but in the end we can get a temperate nation. The agencies of peace may disappoint us but I never will support another war and I unconquerably believe that war can be made as obsolete as medieval torture chambers. Our economic life may be in chaos but, pushed by desperate circumstance and pulled by the most amazing economic possibilities any era ever had, we can in the end achieve a humane society. Men may say that the church in wide areas is a cause of lamentation and alarm and that Christianity is dying, but I am confident man will not live without God or find apart from Christ a satisfying revelation either of the possible Human or of the real Divine. In these things I believe with a long-term faith. If you say that I shall die before they are achieved, I say, Then let my children take up the torch, and after them let their children's children join the apostolic succession of those faithful

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souls whom this world cannot tame. So, a few men started Cologne Cathedral and handed it on for over six hundred years, until their descendants finished it. It takes a long-term faith to do great business or lift a man's spirit from disillusionment.

I have talked to my own soul this morning. What I have said seems to me true, but in my personal experience one thing is needed to make it effective in daily living—an inner sanctuary where I can stand aside from the world and in solitude recover faith in life. When Elijah was disillusioned—the backers of Baal triumphant and he saying, “I, even I only, am left”—it was not the wind or the earthquake or the fire that restored his soul, but the still, small voice. If you live out there in the world all the time, disillusionment will get you. Keep the path open to the inner sanctuary. There habitually rise from the unreal to the real, from the transient to the eternal, from the trivial to the significant, from short views to long looks, from fear to faith, lest the music in you die!

*On Making Christianity
Too Easy**

ONE can think of many sermons easier to preach and more comfortable to listen to than this is going to be. But today we stand on the threshold of a week whose memories center in the cross, and the cross was not, is not, and never can be, easy or comfortable. Indeed, amid the many diverse meanings which Christians have seen in the cross, there streams one central, practical, livable message, so personal to each of us that I should suppose it would strike home today through whatever divergencies of creed and church may be represented here: Beware of making your Christianity too easy.

The history of Christianity could be written in terms of the ingenious and fatal ways in which Christians have tried to make their faith and practise easy. This is one of the greatest dangers in ritualism—it substitutes for moral seriousness and Christlike living external, religious observances, and multitudes so have made their Christianity costless. This also is the danger of creedalism. Believe this set of theological propositions, the dogmatists say, and you will be a Christian. That is too easy. To substitute acquiescence in a formal creed for the daring faith in God and man which led Christ to the cross is to put rubble in the place of marble and use cheap glass for diamonds. Such rehearsal of inherited opinions costs too little.

As a matter of history, therefore, the truth we are trying to state goes deep and reaches far. The tragedy of Christianity repeatedly has lain in the persistent, ingenious endeavor to make it costless. But that essentially ruins Christianity. The very charter of discipleship is difficult: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

* A Palm Sunday Sermon.

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Many of us, not being ritualists or creedalists, may be thinking of ourselves as outside the sweep of this truth. We ought not to be allowed so to remain as external spectators. While we should be sorry not to be Christians, how cleverly we all contrive, each in his own way, to make being Christian an easy thing!

In the first place, some do that by a negative, moderate morality. We all are familiar with loose and liberal talking which reduces Christian living to mediocre levels. By being a Christian, some one says, I mean being a decent man, doing as well as you can, being a good citizen. Listen to Jesus: "What do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same?"

If this Holy Week is to mean to us anything morally serious, we had better start it with a good look at the cross. And the cross says that if this world, or any personal or social portion of it, is to be saved from its evil, some one has to be needlessly good. That is, some one must care deeply about human trouble and, while not himself responsible for causing it or under necessity of doing anything about it, must voluntarily take it on himself. Above the cross of Christ this superscription might well have stood: "He took it on himself." Without that principle of action no great thing ever has been done on earth—vicarious sacrifice, where some one, who did not need to, voluntarily assumed a heavy task. Florence Nightingale did that for the wounded, John Howard for the prisoners; our mothers did that for us many a time; Christ did that for the world. That quality of spirit and mode of action exert the most tremendous, moral lifting power that the world has ever known, and if we are calling ourselves Christian without having a share in exercising it, we are making our Christianity too easy.

I suspect we are. I challenge our consciences with the accusation that we are. A Roman Catholic nun saw one of the girls she had helped to train throwing herself away in an illicit love affair. All efforts to dissuade the girl failed. Then the nun began flogging herself daily. Every day as that girl continued her loose living she knew that her friend, the nun, alone in her cell, was flogging herself.

ON MAKING CHRISTIANITY TOO EASY

That girl had to give in, for she found herself facing, until she no longer could endure it, the most tremendous moral force in the world.

I can say as well as you that what that nun did is not literally reproducible in our lives, but I cannot escape the towering fact that being a Christian involves essentially that spirit—caring enough for persons and causes to sink our lives in them. If some one here shrinks back from this as goodness too extreme, far beyond ordinary human capacity, I protest. Upon the contrary, at this very point Christianity faces today the severest competition it has to meet. One sometimes sees more of the cross outside the church than in it. What, for example, is the cause in this world for which more people are willing to die than for any other? Nationalism. Countless millions of people at their country's call, when sound the fife and drum, will go out literally to lay down their lives. What is the cause next in order for which people are willing to die? Radical, social revolution. If Christians, as a whole, were as willing to sacrifice life and property for their cause as communists are for theirs, we could lift the world off its hinges. At the very point where Christians talk the most, the cross, Christians face today their most serious competition from those who practise what we preach about—the tremendous force of vicarious sacrifice.

Here in this church we must this year make a special appeal for benevolences, so as not to leave high and dry those community philanthropies on which depends the happiness of hundreds of families. I know all the excuses for this necessity. The depression—I have heard of that, and in the face of it some of you have been so generous that you need not take to yourselves what I am saying now. But I also know how some of the rest of us live, in what commodious circumstances our existence is set, and I venture that some of us have yet to learn the first elemental lessons of sacrificial giving, in the face of human need as appalling as this nation ever knew. I take to myself this truth, all the way from the sacrificial use of what we have to the far deeper

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matter of sacrificially using what we are. Do you take it to yourself! We put the cross on the high altar of the church. Too often we leave it there. It is very lonely there. That is not where the cross started. It started in the thick of real life—very tragically real. It wants to get back where it started, among the people, saying to us, Beware of making your Christianity too easy.

Again, some of us make our Christianity too easy by substituting for moral courage and devotion the spiritual experience and love of beauty. All the more freely one speaks of this in such a church as we have built. For this church itself bears witness to the fact that we regard beauty as a gateway to the experience of God and rejoice in worship stimulated and enriched by symmetry, harmony, and color. If, however, this is all there is to our Christianity, it is too easy.

I say this the more freely because personally I could not live without the use of beauty as a road to God. One of the most incredible things in atheism is that it must explain as an irrelevance, a fortuity, an accident, the beauty of the world. That simply will not do. Incredible religious creeds seem more credible than that. No wonder Browning said that just when we think we have gotten rid of God,

. . . there's a sunset-touch,
A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
A chorus-ending from Euripides.

But if our Christianity is made up of sunset-touches and fancies from a flower-bell, and chorus-endings from Euripides, it costs too little.

Clearly, Jesus would despise the mere esthete in religion, and all the more searching would be his condemnation because he himself was such a lover of beauty. He told perfect parables, so that one does not understand him if one does not see that he, too, was a very great artist. He told his disciples, considering the lilies of the field, to see that "even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." He spent his last night in a garden to gather strength for

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his ordeal. Here is one more marvel of the Master, that he, who, alike in his appreciation and his creation of the beautiful, was an artist, was so much more besides. To see him, with so sensitive a spirit, moving up through beauty to see the face of God and then walking up to the cruel ugliness of the cross as though to say, This also is religion, to endure and dare for the kingdom of God on earth, takes one's breath away.

Indeed, if he should hear us now talking about him as an artist, one can imagine what he might reply. Artist? he would say; Very well, but if you are going to use that word about me go deep with it! Remember, he might say, what one of your own poets, Wordsworth, wrote about the meaning of being an artist:

. . . that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A' dedicated Spirit.

That is the soul of a real artist, "a dedicated Spirit" laid hold on by a mastery which commands his life.

Some of you, I can imagine Jesus saying, are making your Christianity too easy. You build beautiful churches; you have glorious music; with loveliness you stimulate your souls to worship. So far, so good! I too loved the flowers, and when, swinging round the brow of Olivet, I saw the temple with its golden dome, I was moved to the depths. But to be a Christian is more than that.

My friends, it had better be more than that to us now. The world needs more than that. Wherever one looks, this is a soiled and desperate world, where a merely esthetic Christianity is of no more use than rose-water. Recall how Henry Ward Beecher put it: "Religion means work. Religion means work in a dirty world. Religion means peril; blows given, but blows taken as well. Religion means transformation. The world is to be cleaned by somebody; and you are not called of God if you are ashamed to scour and scrub." "Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary"—yes, but, after the uplift and refreshment of *that*, mops and

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pails and some unclean place to scour and scrub! Else we are making our Christianity too easy!

Again, some of us, especially we who are religious liberals, make our Christianity costless by watering down and thinning out our faith. We have tried to formulate our Christian ideas in easily credible forms, and, so doing, we have attenuated them so that hardly anything is left to believe at all. This is the outstanding peril of modernism; let a modernist be the one to say so! The woods of liberal religion are full of people whose faith is so vague and indefinite that nothing could be easier than to believe it. There lies the trouble with it—it costs nothing.

It was inevitable that multitudes of people should go through this process. They started with old theological ideas impossible for intelligence to retain, and in reaction they sought forms of faith simple and easy to accept. Many of us here went through that process; we sympathize with its motives; we had to rid ourselves of incredible theologies which insulted our intelligence and made consent to Christianity either insincere or impossible.

Now, however, that we have done that, see where many have come out. They have ideas of God, the soul, and immortality so vague, indefinite, and simple to believe, that it makes little difference whether they believe them or not. They have made their Christianity too thin, shallow, and undemanding.

The faith in God and man which sent Christ to the cross had in it something wild, dangerous, and difficult. Such a faith need not insult one's intelligence, but it certainly is costly. It is a tremendous experience to believe in God as Jesus did. We liberals in religion, who have specialized in stating Christianity so that it would be simple to accept, and who have accomplished in large part our negative task of sloughing off incredibilities, should turn now in a new direction—toward the immensity, difficulty, and venture-someness of this high faith which stakes its life on God.

What fools many of us Christians have been in comparison with the scientists! They too had old ideas to get

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rid of. They got rid of them. But they did not substitute for them vague indefiniteness, merely simple to believe or making little difference whether believed or not. Einstein's universe easy to believe! The world of quantum physics easy to believe! The new science presents the most elaborate, complicated, difficult ideas of the cosmos ever held. The scientists do not say that it is easy. They say that it is magnificent, that it is tremendous, that it is on the road out toward the everlasting truth. We had better quit our obsession with easiness and rise to heights like that in our Christian thinking.

There is something wild about believing in the living God. It flies in the face of superficial facts. It defies the plausibilities. A man who thinks it simple does not know its meaning. A man who makes it easy is not really believing it at all. Against all that is dark and damnable in life, faith in God stakes everything on what is right and excellent as the revelation of the Ultimately Real. What is courage? Courage is adventuring life for a possibility, as Columbus did when he sailed west. What then is faith? Faith is believing that the possibility really exists. Such is the venturesome faith which carried Christ through the cross, and, as you see, while many words may be used in describing it—tremendous, austere, sublime, mountain moving—one word we may not use: 'easy.' Ah, Christ on Calvary, to think that a whole generation of Christians should have spent so large a portion of their time trying to reduce your majestic and moving faith to easiness. Today sounds another call—Do not seek for something easy to believe; seek for something great to believe.

In one more popular way some of us make our Christianity too easy: we restrict its application to the individual, personal life and keep it out of our social attitudes. Christ deals with the souls of men one by one, we say, with their inner needs and motives, and at that point we stop and do not listen further to what Christ has to say about business, politics, race relationships, war. One reason for so cooping up our Christianity within ourselves is that it is easy to do

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so. "My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine"—such individualistic religion can be sweet and gentle. It is the kind of Christianity which costs least. But to carry the principles of Christ out into this terrific world and claim for his ideas the right to dominate man's social life is to state Christianity and undertake to live it in its most difficult form.

I know I am talking to some of you here. You want to be Christians; you have caught some of the beauty of the gospel in your personal characters, and you know that the Christian part of you is the best there is in you. But you do not really believe that the principles of Christ ever can dominate economic and international relationships, and you are not thinking hard or doing much to bring such a possibility to pass. That's the honest truth, isn't it? My friends, your individualistic Christianity is too easy.

The idea that all mankind will finally submit themselves to the suppressions, tyrannies, and regimentations involved in the methods of Russian communism, does not seem to me credible. But mankind might, at the long last, see the salvation which would come, were our social relationships informed by Christ's principles of freedom and fraternity. The communists, however, are not so excessively modest about their faith as many of us Christians are about ours. They do not say that communism is merely an individual matter. They say they are going to conquer the world with it. They are beating us at our own game. They have more faith in the universal validity of what they stand for than millions of Christians have in the universal validity of Christ and his right and power to inform and reconstruct the social life of man. That is our shame: we reduce our Christianity to a few inner attitudes. It is too easy.

If some one says that the application of Christian principles to social life would involve changes as deep and radical as communism itself would involve, I cordially agree. When Christ gets through with us, our economic and international life, our racial relations, and our churches will be completely transformed. God speed the day! No humane man

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can watch millions of people cruelly hurt as they are now by the consequences of war and economic maladjustments, without praying for deep-seated, far-reaching change. There is no use trying to dress up our present social order in any disguise that will make it seem tolerable. Every intelligent person must see that it is not tolerable. Even Little Red Riding Hood, when she saw the wolf disguised in a night-cap, knew enough to cry, "What big teeth you have, Grand-mother!" Millions of people in this country are saying that about our social order. Big teeth, indeed!

In this situation how futile our Christianity is if it has no faith in its own applicability to social questions! Our international life is cursed in the very places where it is not Christian. Our economic life is bedeviled in the very places where it has denied Christ. Many, calling us modernists, say we do not really believe in Christ. Surely some of the old theological formulas about him are incredible. But if this is faith in him, then we possess it: he has, and he alone, in his basic principles of life, the true roadway into our personal and social salvation. "He that hath the Son hath the life," and that is as true in international relationships as in personal character. Difficult to believe and practise *that*, does some one say? You are right. But anything else is too easy.

The most fascinating thing in Christianity has always been the cross. Why is that? Because in the long run we do not want an easy religion. We want a commanding, challenging religion that will take all we have and then call for more. That is the kind of religion we have in Christ.

*Progress: The Illusion and the Reality**

THESE days through which we are passing now are sobering to all thoughtful people. They are especially sobering to us of the older generation who were brought up on the idea that the world is forging steadily ahead, climbing an ever-ascending avenue, achieving inevitable progress. Two generations ago practically every voice was saying that. Said Herbert Spencer, "Progress is not an accident, but a necessity." Poets said it, as in Tennyson's lyric confidence that "the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns." As for more vulgar voices, from bigger and better business to a bigger and better world, progress, they said, was our manifest destiny.

Today we are soberer about that. We had better be. The idea of progress was unknown in the ancient world and is not to be taken for granted by us. Plato taught that mankind moved around vast cycles and came back to the starting point to begin again. Marcus Aurelius thought that in human history there was no flow, as in a river, only fluctuation, as in the sea, up and down. "He who is forty years old," said Marcus Aurelius, "if he has any understanding at all, has seen by virtue of the uniformity that prevails all things which have been and all that will be." That is typical of ancient thought.

If some one asks, Where, then, did the idea of progress come from? we may answer that we can at least discern the time when men began believing in it, and can name the major causes out of which it rose.

For one thing, Columbus discovered America, adding a whole new hemisphere to man's opportunity for adventure and achievement. The geographical effects of that were immense but the psychological effects were overwhelming. On Thanksgiving Day, when we remember the pioneers of this

* A Sermon preached on the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

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new continent, we are celebrating one of the chief reasons why mankind began to believe in progress.

For another thing, Copernicus and Galileo unveiled a new universe. The astronomical effects of that were great, but, if anything, the psychological effects were greater. In a world where almost overnight a new heaven and a new earth are uncovered, man cannot go on thinking that human experience is like the sea's fluctuation, up and down. It appears to be a river, flowing into new courses.

Then came the American and French Revolutions, swinging wide the doors of democracy. That seemed to end the static tyranny of kings, and to put into the hands of the people power to mold plastic societies into new forms. Who could tell what might happen, as mankind walked through the doors of democracy to fresh achievements?

Then came scientific inventiveness. After that once started, man could not believe in a static world. Francis Bacon, fascinated by the discovery of printing, gunpowder, and ocean-sailing, was among the first to abandon the old idea that the ancients were more advanced than the moderns. With every generation progress has seemed more obviously here. Harnessed steam and electricity, steamships, railroads, telegraph, telephones, automobiles, radios, and airplanes—a man who lives forty years has not seen everything that is or will be on this earth. So began the familiar mood in which men stand, as it were, on tiptoe wondering what great new thing will come tomorrow and desiring not so much to go to heaven as to see the world a hundred years from now.

To cap the climax came the doctrine of evolution. That put a philosophy under the whole idea of progress. So, we said, the universe itself is progressive; progress is a cosmic law. In our youth we went out into the most optimistic generation in human history, feeling at times as though we were upon an escalator, willy-nilly going up.

We are soberer about that now. Some of us have fallen like Lucifer from the heaven of optimism to the pit of depression. All of us must see that whatever else is true about progress, it is no escalator, no smoothly flowing river; it is

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a spiritual achievement, hard to win, easy to lose anywhere—in a family, in a personality, in a civilization—and the swiftest way to lose it is to be fooled by the illusions of it.

Being fooled by the illusions of progress is a familiar experience. Families may be here who have faced it. They were progressing—their houses bigger, their incomes better, their prestige higher. Everybody said, See how that family is getting on! But in the end their seeming progress turned out to be illusion. The real life of the home was not getting on.

Individuals may be here who have faced a like experience in personal life. They were getting on—larger salaries, more responsible positions, wider influence. In America such progress has been a familiar fact. George Arliss in his reminiscences tells of a fellow actor, John Mason, whose work Arliss greatly admired but upon whom he makes this comment: "John Mason would, in my opinion, have been the greatest actor in America if his private character had been as well balanced as his public performances." O my soul, the illusions of progress!

If there is any place in the world where this needs to be said, it is in America. We were getting on. We did not stop to believe in progress; we plunged headforemost into it. A visitor in Detroit found himself surrounded on every side by the slogan "Greater Detroit." He asked three citizens what it meant and none was quite sure. One said it meant having a bigger population. The second said it meant being greater than Cleveland. The third had a sublimer faith—that it meant being greater than Chicago. That is typical. We were not sure whither we were progressing but in our eyes going meant going ahead and change meant advance. How cheap it all seems now! We were progressing straight toward war, unemployment, economic catastrophe.

We Americans are soberer now. Let us be frank. Many are frightened. Sometimes above the noise of this city's streets I think I hear another sound inaudible to all but spirit ears: whistling—multitudes of men and women inwardly whistling to keep their courage up.

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Nothing that any man can say can go to the bottom of this, but what we are trying to say this morning is certainly important. We have been fooled by the illusions of progress—bigness, external equipment of things, outward standards of success, scientific inventions manifold. We have been tricked into supposing that such things mean progress, and it is a mad illusion. What shall it profit a man or nation to gain the whole world of such things and lose the soul? How that word of Jesus does tower up in days like these!

For one thing, what shall it profit if we get bigness and lose human values? Jesus would say that. You cannot imagine his being impressed by anything simply because it was big. The most precious things in human experience are not big; they are small, always small, like personalities. No more joy can exist on this earth than one personality can possess. Show us one personality capacious for happiness and in point of intensity that is all the joy the world can know. No more suffering can exist on this earth than one personality can endure. Show us one personality sensitively suffering and there, in point of intensity, is all the suffering the world can bear. Here lie the destinies of human life, inside people one by one, and whatever happens outside, so far as progress is concerned, must be tested by what it does to people inside.

When George Washington came to New York to take the presidency, there were about twenty-nine thousand people in the town. Have we progressed since then? Certainly size is not the test. From twenty-nine thousand to about seven million, from small warehouses to seventy-story skyscrapers—that is not the test. Unless we can see what is going on inside people we cannot tell whether we have gone forward or backward. Of those twenty-nine thousand, two thousand were slaves. It is better to have done with that. Education has opened wide the doors of opportunity to boys and girls who would not have had it then. That is better. Scientific medicine is widely available for all the people. That is much better. Slums have come, down the dark cañons of the city's streets, damning thousands of boys and girls before they had a chance. That is worse. Many other people, not in slums,

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are caught here in a vast, impersonal machine which grinds their souls like grist, and the power of municipal government has never yet been dedicated primarily to the enlargement and enrichment of human life. That is failure. Anyway, size is not the test. Bigness is one of the commonest illusions of progress.

Ah, Master, it was when you heard your disciples talking about big things, which of them should be the greatest, that you took a little child and put him in the midst of them. Do it again for us here. We need it. For we have worshiped bigness. We are notorious for that.

One explanation is that in the pioneer days, when the frontiers were being bravely pushed westward, there was little to be proud of in point of cultural amenity, and so the typical American, as a psychological compensation, began boasting about size. Under the rough pioneer conditions, things might not be refined but they certainly were big. In that regard even this new, raw land had it over the old countries. So we Americans developed pride in bigness—big country, big cities, big buildings, big business, and an assumption has underlain our pride—"bigger and better."

My friends, the least we can do with our national disaster is to come out of it, in a sense never true of us before, *personality-minded*. Let us put that child in the center of the picture, where Jesus put him, and keep him there. Nothing else matters. What economic life does to people, what the cities do to people; what changing family conditions do to people—nothing else matters. Here in this nation we have learned, as no other nation ever learned, to conjugate the verb *to have*. In all its moods and tenses we have learned how to conjugate that. But that is not progress. Progress consists in learning how to conjugate another verb altogether, *to be*.

Again, what shall it profit if we gain all these new scientific inventions and lose goodwill? Naturally, we have supposed that the amazing output of scientific inventiveness meant progress. When I try to imagine any one saying to me in boyhood that some day in New York City I would speak into

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a microphone and later would receive a letter from a friend in Central Africa who heard me, it would have seemed incredible. Such things are a commonplace today. Amazing progress! Progress? What shall it profit? For scientific invention involves new means of communication, and every new means of communication involves new points of contact, and every new point of contact is a new possibility of friction. Science solving our problems? Science is piling up our problems, loading on mankind the necessity both of intelligence and goodwill—universal, planetary goodwill such as mankind never faced before.

War used to be bad enough, but Beverley Nichols is right—we need a new word for it now. That old thing they used to call 'war' is gone. What we have on our hands now is so different that it deserves another name. And one point of difference is that in the old days, when nations fought, they had to contend upon their borders, where physically they touched, but now we fight all around the globe—on the earth, in the air, in the deeps of the sea—and when some fool shoots an archduke in Serajevo one of the immediate results is that two tribes in Africa, at peace with each other, are seized, one by the Central Powers, and the other by the Allies, and hurled at each other's throats in murderous fury. Moreover, the major fact which makes it possible so to plunge the whole world into bloodshed and launch the long train of disasters which follow after is our possession of new scientific powers. What shall it profit?

H. G. Wells likens us to quarrelsome children in a nursery into whose hands science has put poisoned razor blades, bombs, corrosive fluids, and the like, while we have no nurse to intervene but humanity's poor wisdom. Whether that poor wisdom can rise to the pitch of effectual intervention and prevent our nursery being blown to smithereens Wells calls the most fundamental problem in mundane affairs at the present time. Aye! What shall it profit?

Nothing that science alone can do is by itself progress. It may mean even the suicide of civilization. But scientific

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inventiveness in the hands of goodwill—that would be progress.

I am pleading for ordinary, everyday, essential, ethical Christianity. Some people say it is done for. Very well; then civilization is done for. For there is no possibility in this world, with our modern scientific power, to have progress without those basic factors in character which Jesus put at the center of his message. Never was the need of them more deep or the cry for them more desperate.

Once in a while in history one does see an area of human life carried over from the domain of violence to the domain of goodwill. Then mankind steps forward. Schools that trusted in the flogging of children have discovered that goodwill works better. That is progress. The American states were once at civil war. Never again! Such a cataclysm is forever past. That is progress. The American colonies and Canada used to invade each other and we might have now a fortified and irritated frontier. Never again! No matter what happens. That is progress. Indeed, despite the desperate difficulties of the present situation, the agencies of organized peace in Geneva may yet succeed in keeping their heads above the swirling flood. That would be progress.

Come closer in. In your household, let us suppose, you have everything which scientific inventiveness can give you. How is your *home* getting on? That question goes beyond science. That involves factors deep, intimate, personal, spiritual—the heart of the home which must use things if things are to do the home any good at all. What profit for the family, the nation, civilization, in anything that science can do without the soul?

Once more, what profit if we gain the whole world of things and have low standards of success? Jesus would say that. He walked about Palestine in his day, meeting people who thought they were succeeding: Zacchæus grown rich on graft; the rich man tearing down his barns and building greater; Herod the politician, called “that fox,” by Jesus; Annas and Caiaphas, the ruling priests—business, politics,

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and religion, then as now, interpreting success in terms that leave high moral standards out. What did it profit?

We cannot in America claim unfamiliarity with *that*. Others say that material success has been our very god. When the average American hears that, he generally blames individuals. He picks out some person he does not admire, who has succeeded, and says, See, he has bowed down before the false god of material success! My friends, this blaming of scapegoats is too easy. In any land, at any time, the standards of success are a social creation. We, the people, determine what shall be called success. There have been times and places, as in the medieval city of Florence, where to be a great person was to be a great artist and all the people acclaimed his glory. You may be sure, then, that if in this country material success has been our god, we, the people, have put him on his throne and have kept him there. We have kotowed and salaamed to that kind of success. We have desperately wanted it for ourselves even when we missed it. The trouble in this country has been not alone the people who have succeeded but the way in which the rest of us have thought about success and tried to get it.

Well, we are soberer now. What has it profited?

When we speak like this, our thought turns first to the business world. Certainly, the truth applies there. Only this last week I heard one of the leading bankers in this city say that in view of the revelations recently coming out of the financial district, a high-minded business man must hang his head in shame. I should think so. Some of those men, who were handed vast responsibility involving the welfare of millions, doublecrossed everybody from the government to their own friends, whom they were supposed to be serving.

Nevertheless, let a man of religion say frankly that false standards concern the church as much as they do business. The tragedy of organized Christianity has been that so often outward show, big buildings, autocratic power, massed wealth, have been taken as the symbols of success and progress. When has Christianity succeeded? Only when some soul has

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rediscovered Christ. Some St. Francis of Assisi comes, the flame burning in him which was a fire in Jesus—a simple and sincere love of God and man—and lo, the insights of the seers and the faiths of the martyrs are confirmed again. By the way, who was the Pope when St. Francis was here? I have forgotten. At any rate, he does not represent the profoundest element in Christianity's success. There is no Christian success except in souls that have rediscovered Christ.

Whether in business or religion, we ought to take this seriously. I am not pessimistic about the present situation but I am sobered by it. The highest wisdom which our fathers garnered from the fields of history is being demonstrated among us: nothing that any nation can do externally matters much without character. I know we need more than character. Intelligence—we need it desperately. As another has said, if I were drowning I would rather see a burglar who could swim than a bishop who couldn't. That is true. We deeply need ability and intelligence. But, my friends, we would not be drowning if in the first place we had had enough high-minded, public-spirited character.

Since that first Thanksgiving Day in Massachusetts, we, the American people, have staged on this continent one of the most amazing performances in human history. Indeed, we have. But remember what George Arliss said about John Mason: “. . . if his private character had been as well balanced as his public performances.”

This, then, is the conclusion of the matter. We of this new generation have talked freely about our opinion of our ancestors. I am much more curious as to what they would think of us. Some of them I would pass up, not caring what they did think. But some of them were real personalities and at times, on days like these, one sees them, like a cloud of witnesses, watching us in this modern arena and trying to talk to us. They might say:

It is amazing what you have done. We never dreamed anything like this. You have harnessed the forces of the universe

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until, if man's life did consist in the abundance of things he could produce and possess, you would be on your way to an earthly paradise. But you must see that something is the trouble—inside. There is a limit to what you can get out of things. You never can get more than a pint out of a pint cup. It is foolish to try. And you can get no more out of things than things can give, and they are not God.

You have blown upon your hands and gone out to achieve success, master scientific power, build a big world. You are like the witch in that drama "Macbeth," which a playwright named Shakespeare wrote just before our day—the witch who chanted that she would do and do and do. Well, we also *did*. You will not deny us that—we faced a task which we did. But we were not so tempted as you are to forget that the destinies of the race are within the soul. It is easier to build a skyscraper than to build great character. It is easier to erect your modern apartment houses than to achieve the peace that passeth all understanding, when you are in them. It is easier to amass physical power than it is to achieve spiritual life which knows how to use it. It is easier to harness the forces of the external universe than to release the inner powers of the divine world by which man lives indeed. And when you do this easier thing and omit the deeper matter, where does it bring you save to catastrophe? Lift up your eyes and see. One civilization after another has fallen, fooled by its illusions. What profit without the soul?

*The Towering Question:
Is Christianity Possible?*

MANY people find it difficult to believe in Christianity. They picture Christianity as a creed, concerning which they have to decide whether or not it is credible. When, then, they do not find it credible, they think that ends the matter and say, often wistfully, that they cannot believe in Christianity.

Surely, there is a radical mistake somewhere in this picture of what Christianity is all about. Let us at the start put the case bluntly. Christianity is primarily something to be *done*. It is not first of all a finished set of propositions to be accepted; it is first of all an unfinished task to be completed. It is a way of thinking about life and living life to be wrought out personally and socially on earth. The question to be asked about it is not simply, Is it true? but, Can we ever in this world make it come true? not simply, Is it credible? but, Is it possible?

So blunt a statement of the case may well call out the protest that, after all, Christianity does involve ideas, doctrines, truths, which must be believed if the Christian task is to be Christian. To be sure it does. A full-face photograph and a profile are not contradictory, and because today we are talking about the full-face view of this matter we are not denying the profile. Of course, the Christian task to be done is associated with Christian ideas to be believed. Many people, however, are living spiritually arid and pointless lives because they never have put the Christian task first and then seen the Christian ideas as instruments in its accomplishment.

One who is fearful that thus we may belittle Christian truth should consider science. Nobody would suspect science of minimizing ideas. Nevertheless, science also is a deed to be done and every idea is an instrument for a task. Could

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steamships cross the seas? Men theoretically said, No: no ship could carry coal enough to stoke its engines across the Atlantic. That disputed matter never could have been settled in debate alone. The crossing of the ocean by steam was an enterprise not simply to be thought out but to be worked out.

Could men fly? Leonardo da Vinci dreamed it long ago and throughout the succeeding centuries of debate the same thing could have been said about flying which we just have said about Christianity. The question was not simply, Are the ideas of aviation true? but, Can we ever make them come true?

Of course, yellow fever was stopped by a process involving ideas. Nevertheless, there is a man still living in this country, permanently invalided because long ago he deliberately and courageously let himself be bitten by an infected mosquito to find out what really did cause yellow fever and hence how to stop it. Science is not simply ideas to be accepted but deeds to be done.

If that is true in the realm where pure intelligence is most exalted, how much more in other realms much nearer Christianity, such as art? Many of us recall the long process of this church's building, the ideas which went into it, the theories and formulas which were involved, and we recall, too, how all this came to point and meaning, was lifted up and made significant, because every theory was embodied in a task, every idea an instrument for getting something done.

In no realm can anybody understand the full significance of an idea until he sees it as a means of achievement. Many minds are in confusion because they never have thought of Christianity in such terms. Is Christianity true?—they have debated that without end, but not, Is it something that we can make come true?

In facing this issue we well may look at the world about us with its tremendous problems—like war. The oldest historic monument on earth concerns war. Take camels and go out into the Sinaitic Peninsula, down the valleys where the Pharaohs' turquoise mines used long ago to be. You will see it carved there yet on the great rock face, the oldest

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known historic monument on earth. It is a Pharaoh with uplifted weapon about to crush the skull of an Asiatic captive forced to his knees before him. That represents war thirty-four centuries before Christ; and now, nineteen centuries after Christ, with weapons more terrific than any Pharaoh could have dreamed, we are at it still.

Or consider the tragic human consequences of our economic life, organized around self-interest. Edwin Markham put it in a quatrain:

‘Two things,’ said Kant, ‘fill me with breathless awe:
The starry heaven and the moral law.’
But I know a thing more awful and obscure—
The long, long patience of the plundered poor.

See, then, this present world on one side, with its tragic human problems, and, on the other, Christ and what he stands for—noble character, the ideal of brotherhood, the method of love, belief in the victory of righteousness. What is the towering question rising out of that contrast? Surely, not first of all, Are Christ’s ideas theoretically credible? but, Are they, in a world like this, possible? not simply, Are they true? but, Can we make them come true?

In saying this we are getting back to the first impression which Jesus made upon his hearers. Of all personalities who have swayed the thought of humankind, none could have been less speculative and theoretical than Jesus. Nobody ever met him and went away thinking that he had been faced with a theoretical problem. Moreover, the reason for that is plain: every element in Jesus’ teaching is livable. Run through the Sermon on the Mount and note that each element in his teaching can be tried out in life: brotherliness, cherishing no inward hate—that is livable; purity which even in thought respects womanhood—that is livable; sincerity, so that a man’s “Yea” needs no oath, his word as good as his bond—that is livable; and generosity which unostentatiously helps its fellows, the right hand not knowing what the left hand does—that is livable; inner fellowship with God in the shrine of the spirit, and faith in the victory of right-

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eousness—that is livable. Every emphasis of Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount can be tried out in life. No wonder, then, that after finishing it he said, "Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and *doeth* them. . . ."

If, then, all Christ's teaching can be lived, every presentation of it was a call, not for debate but for decision. Will you? he said. Here is a task to be done, a life to be lived, an idea to be worked out. Will you? That is far from the manner of facing Christianity to which many of us have grown accustomed. We older ones, especially, have lived through a generation when one factor after another pushed into the foreground of attention the speculative, argumentative aspects of Christianity. First, the theory of evolution made many accustomed doctrines obsolete. Then fresh light on the Bible outlawed old beliefs about that. Then the new cosmos broke up the ancient molds in which ideas of God had long been fabricated. Then a fresh vision of the historic Jesus so humanized him as to make ancient dogmatic statements about him seem both untrue and unlovely. The total consequence was to push the argumentative, controversial elements in Christianity into the foreground. We even split into fundamentalists and liberals and, vehemently arguing, hurled back and forth the question, Is it credible? Some of us here were in the thick of that. We are not denying that it was necessary and had its use but, with all the difficulties of this present time, it is healthier to be here.

Look out on this generation. History repeats itself. After an era when the Christian churches contended in vexed theological argument, so absorbed in intellectual adjustment that often they forgot what the intellectual adjustment was about, we are plunged into an era which faces us with a towering task. Can we ever in this world make Christianity come true? Can the principles of Christ and his ways of living life be victorious? Is Christianity possible? On that question hangs everything which matters most in the religious life of our time.

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Note again that this way of getting at the matter is not a cheap evasion of intellectual difficulties in order to make Christian faith easier. Some may have said, This preacher is trying to escape the intellectual problems of Christian belief by reducing Christianity to a practical task only. To which I answer, Tell me which is easier, to believe in the credibility of a formal creed or to believe in the possibility of a Christian world? No, when one chooses that latter as the center of the matter, he is not dodging difficulties or making faith easier.

Some of us can well remember the halcyon days of mid-Victorian optimism, when calling any one a Cassandra or a Jeremiah was to insult him. Cassandra prophesied the fall of Troy; Jeremiah prophesied the fall of Jerusalem. Who wanted to be called names like that when it was the fashion everywhere to be optimistic? But now we are soberer and remember that both Cassandra and Jeremiah were right. Troy did fall; Jerusalem was destroyed. So in a civilization shaken to its center, with some of the dearest things we ever believed in and worked for, like liberty and democracy, a hissing and byword in nations where they were once established, no one can say we are dodging difficulties when we raise the question, Can we make Christ's way of life come true?

This shift of emphasis is particularly wholesome for us who are modernists. For on one point our critics were right: we were Brahmins, what the world calls 'high-brows.' We faced Christianity mainly on theoretical levels and made it an affair of the philosophic academy. In consequence, many of our modernist churches, as any one can see, are spiritually dead and morally futile. For the heart of the common man understands better where the real problem lies. Here is this actual world, blood-drenched, pagan, filled with tragedies so cruel that even in this church they are the hardest things your ministers have to face. Alongside this actual world stands another thing, this strange, unearthly, enchanting thing, this way of living that was Christ's, his dream of a

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world where peace and brotherhood, integrity and humane-ness reign, of which Walt Whitman sang:

Is it a dream?
Nay but the lack of it the dream,
And failing it life's lore and wealth a dream,
And all the world a dream.

The heart of the plain man understands that the central question of Christianity is, Can we ever in such a world make Christ's vision come true?

When we modernists discover *that*, we discover something else in Christianity which commonly we have lost. I mean the cross. That is where the cross came into Christianity in the first place, and always will come into it again, not in the acceptance of a theory but in the assumption of a task. If Christianity is a finished set of propositions to be believed, it is not costly. But if Christianity is an unfinished task to be completed in this terrific world, and if Christian faith is faith that this is the kind of world where that can be done, we are back again at Calvary. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"—that is Jesus, calling not for the acceptance of a theory but for the assumption of a task.

Consider, for another thing, that some of us need this truth more than we need anything else if we are to keep our spiritual life from drying up. We pay our speculative intellect a higher compliment than it deserves when we suppose that the main reason for the loss of Christian faith is argument. Upon the contrary, in any realm if one abstracts an idea from its appropriate task and tries to keep it in isolation as a mere belief, it always dries up. The only way we can keep any idea, Christian or not, real and vital is to do something with it. A generation ago, one of the most prominent professors in Yale University described the process by which he lost many of his religious beliefs, in a way both accurate and revealing. Said he: "I never consciously gave up a religious belief. It was as if I had put my beliefs into a drawer, and when I opened it there was nothing there at all."

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Inevitably so! Take one look at the life of the Man of Nazareth and see that the last place where it would be possible to keep any real faith concerning him would be in a drawer. When you opened it, there would be nothing there.

If some one insists that something still is there, let me describe it to you. It is possible for a man to abstract from the Christian faith a selected list of comforting ideas—the fatherliness of God, the inward retreat to his peace, and such like—a carefully selected list of consoling ideas. These a man puts into a drawer. Once in a while, when he wants comfort, he takes them out and puts them back again. Ask him if he is a Christian and he will say, Yes! Undoubtedly he does possess Christian ideas and beliefs. How many millions like that do you think are in our churches? It is the commonest caricature of Christianity, the reduction of the amazing faith of Jesus in the possibility of a Christian world to a few solacing ideas in a drawer.

I know atheists who are much better Christians than that. As was written of Moses, "When Moses was grown up . . . he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens," so these, my unbelieving friends, have put their lives alongside humankind, hurt by the hurt of others so deeply that they have cried out in agony of soul that no good God would ever suffer this to be. For very pity's sake they have surrendered faith in God and then have gone out to try themselves to be God to men and help the race. They have rejected the Christian theory; they have accepted the task. If I know anything about Jesus, he would look on them as long ago he looked upon another, saying, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

Is some one saying, This means that the preacher thinks it makes small difference what a man believes? No, that is not true. But I am sure that what does make a difference was put by Walter Rauschenbusch into a true and ringing phrase: "Wanted: a faith for a task."

Admiral Byrd is again in the Antarctic. Does not such an enterprise demand faith? Indeed it does. Faith in ideas? Yes. Creative faith in the possibility of the enterprise? Yes.

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Faith for a task! So the undertaking and prosecution of the Christian task demand faith. You cannot do it if you are a cynic. Or if you are a Nietzschean and believe this to be the kind of world where the strong ought to squeeze the weak like grapes into their goblets, you cannot do it. Or if you suspect, as Joseph Wood Krutch does, that man has no more significance than the humblest insect that crawls from one annihilation to another, you cannot do it. Or, if you are really atheistic in the sense that you believe in nothing creative here except matter—all man's spiritual life but an accident upon a transient planet—you will cut the nerve of the Christian task at last.

Of course it makes a profound difference what a man believes. As Thomas Huxley said, "the most sacred act of a man's life is to say and to feel, 'I believe. . . .'" But do not mix up that high and sacred matter with belief in the accumulated odds and ends of ecclesiastical opinion which never yet made any difference to Christian character or the prosecution of great social causes. Listen to Jesus: "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness." Aye, first the task; then, Wanted: a faith for the task. That makes Christian belief in God, in man, in the Master, real.

It does one thing more. It challenges each of us, if we will have it so, to be in our daily, homely life defenders of the faith. From Henry VIII on, some queer people have been handed that title. I suspect that even now most of us would think that the real defenders of the faith are the men who argue for it, construct speculative reasons in support of it, help others to adjust their minds to the new knowledge of the world so that faith can claim the consent of all their faculties. How important I think that is you know well. But, my friends, the most convincing thing in the world is never an argument. It is always a deed. Men kept on arguing that transatlantic steamships were incredible until a steamship crossed the Atlantic. That proved it possible and, since possible, credible. Men kept on arguing that habitual flying was unbelievable until men like Lindbergh flew. That proved it possible and, since possible, believable.

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Nine times out of ten the real conviction of mankind that anything is credible has come not from an abstract argument, but from deeds which showed it to be possible. If this is so in such realms, of course it is more obviously so in the kingdom of the spirit. James Russell Lowell was right:

When a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad earth's
aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from east to west.

If, then, the most convincing persuasiveness in life lies in right deeds, you and I, plain people, are involved. Mark Twain once had a negro servant, named Lewis, who worked around his farm. One day Lewis in an extraordinary exhibition of skill and daring stopped a runaway and saved the lives of three of Mark Twain's family circle. This is what Mark Twain wrote about him: "When Lewis arrived the other evening, after having saved those lives by a feat which I think is the most marvelous I can call to mind, when he arrived hunched up on his manure-wagon and as grotesquely picturesque as usual, everybody wanted to go and see how he looked. They came back and said he was beautiful. It was *so*, too, and yet he would have *photographed* exactly as he would have done any day these past seven years." Always, a right deed is beautiful and convincing.

I believe in the possibility of a Christian world, not because I have been argued into it but because I have seen Christian living *done*. I have seen it in persons, firm as steel and beautiful as music, who poured out into this pagan world a Christlike integrity and humaneness which made spiritual life real. I have seen it in homes where what Jesus said ought to be the law of life was the actual principle of fellowship. It was not Christianity argued; it was Christianity achieved. I have seen it in social movements that leaped high barricades, belied the scoffing of cynics and the fears of friends, and opened the doors of new eras. It was not Christianity debated; it was Christianity done.

Could there ever have been a generation in history with more need of such defenders of the faith? If to defend

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Christianity were mainly to argue its credibility, how little most of us could help, but if to defend Christianity is to exhibit its possibility, then every one of us is called for. Victory for decent government in this city would make multitudes believe more in the reality of the spiritual world. The triumph of peace over war, when it comes—as come it will, however long delayed—will lift up innumerable souls into a fresh faith in the reality of the spiritual world. Even when one man stands out, to use George Eliot's phrase, with "the impressiveness of a fine quotation from the Bible . . . in a paragraph of to-day's newspaper," he makes it easier for every one who knows him to believe in God. Is Christianity true? Millions ask that question and the answer will never be in words. It must be in deeds. We must make Christianity come true!

A Plea for True Individualism

WE ARE living in a generation when collectivism is obviously having its innings and 'individualism' is one of the most unpopular words in the vocabulary. Communism in Russia, Fascism in Germany and Italy, the National Industrial Recovery Act in the United States, are radically different in theory and method but in one thing they are identical: they all represent the extension of collective control over individual life. Like it or not, we are in a generation where large-scale planning, centralized control, and the coercion of individual life by the collective will are growing everywhere.

We may explain this master fact of our time as we please. After every breakdown of social life, with chaos supervening, there emerges a dictatorship of one sort or another, as Napoleon's did after the French Revolution. So, following the debacle of civilized society in the Great War, first chaos came and then, in one nation after another, coercive, collective control. War never has made the world safe for democracy; it always makes it ready for dictatorship.

Others will say that this new collectivism is caused primarily by the machine. It is not due to war or to any theories such as communism and socialism; it is machinery which makes it necessary for us to do things together under centralized control. Once machines helped men work; now men help machines work. One must take the measure of that fact if one would understand our era. Machines are the major factor in our new culture. They weave it together. They perform its labor. They link one mechanical process to another until an endless chain emerges with men serving machines. Inevitably, then, our modern life cannot be individualistically handled; it is essentially a collective affair.

Explain this master fact as we will, the consequence is clear: we are living in a time when individualism is break-

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ing down and collectivism is on top of the world. Of course, our spiritual lives are affected by this towering fact. Our souls do not live in a vacuum. Far beyond what many of us here have ever thought, our inward ways of believing, thinking, feeling, living, are deeply affected by this prodigious swing of emphasis from the individual to the collective social mass.

Especially as a Christian, I find myself in these days haunted by some sayings of Jesus, fascinated by their strange disharmony with our times: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"; "It is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish"; "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" Jesus certainly was an individualist. At any rate, while his ultimate goal was a new social order, the kingdom of God on earth, that collective hope was rooted back in indefatigable care about the endless worth and possibility of the individual. "Seek ye first his kingdom"—so, we say, Jesus had a collective ideal. "It is not the will of your Father . . . that one of these little ones should perish"—so, we say, he was an individualist too.

Personally, I do not question the necessity of extending the collective method in our economic life. We have found many realms where we do things better together than separately. The Post Office is collectively run. The public schools are collectively run. We would not go back to roads with private tolls; our American roads, the finest highways in the world, are collectively operated. Many economic enterprises, like public utilities, will in the end almost certainly belong in the collective category. Already, from sanitation and water-works up, socially necessary undertakings have been mechanized, standardized, and taken over by society, and not one of us would vote to go back. Be sure of this: we are going a long way further on that collective road.

For that very reason, the need of true individualism is the more critical. For this tremendous sweep of thought and life

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around the world, carrying us out into an era whose coat of arms well might be collectivism rampant over individualism couchant, is not an economic matter only. Its repercussions are everywhere inside the souls of men and, this morning, in the midst of this towering collectivism I lift the standard of a true individualism, lest we forget.

For one thing, lest we forget that, when our societies have become as collective as they can be made, the test of them still is what happens to individuals. Your ministers find that principle at work in this church. The building itself is large and beautiful; the organization is growing rapidly in numbers; many activities fill seven days and nights a week—would you think much of us if we were content to judge ourselves by such criteria? No. What this church is doing for individuals is the ultimate test. Nothing else matters in the end—whether buildings built, moneys raised, work done, or organizations perfected—except what happens inside boys and girls, men and women, one by one.

Obviously, this is the emphasis of Jesus. Nothing ever was sacred to him save as it helped persons. He never let an abstraction, like religion, or society, or church, or Sabbath, get between him and his clear vision of what was happening to persons one by one. The Sabbath, for example, was one of the most sacred institutions of his people. To observe it was piety; to break its slightest law was sacrilege. But when Jesus saw the Sabbath interfering with the help of one sick man in trouble, he towered in indignation over it; he vehemently crashed through it; he put into a sweeping statement his devastating philosophy about it: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." That is a kind of individualism of endless significance.

Indeed, I am thinking of some one here, on his guard, with his mind set against this appeal. So, he has been saying, this preacher in a Gothic church, with a privileged congregation, is pleading for individualism when all around us is the human wreckage of an individualistic economic order that has ravaged the world; I will now go up to see what this blind man says. My friend, the trouble with our economic order is

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that it has not been, in a Christian sense, individualistic. You may use that adjective about it—we know what you mean—'laissez-faire,' but in our sense our economic system has never been individualistic. It has cared too little what happens to individuals. It has forgotten too much what befalls men and women one by one. So in a prosperous year like 1927 twelve million of our people were living at the bare level of subsistence and twenty million more were living at the minimum level of health and efficiency. To care what happens to them, to test every social institution by what it does to people one by one—that is true individualism.

When some of us look into our own lives to discover what element there most directly can be traced to Jesus, it is this emphasis. Selfish like everybody else, tempted to be satisfied when things are going well with us, loving to nestle down in fortunate circumstance and let the world wag, we might contentedly do that were it not for Jesus. You say that Jesus gives you peace. Well, sometimes! But oftener, I think, in these days Jesus makes me miserable. His terrific care for people one by one, his indignation against institutions that hurt people one by one, his insistence on testing every social custom and institution by what they do to people one by one—that is no soporific, no opiate for the people as the communists say; that is the fountainhead of the most tireless and dependable social devotion this earth will ever know.

What, for example, is supposed to be the start of Lincoln's determination to help end slavery? The slave market in New Orleans where he saw individuals being auctioned off one by one, seeing which result of a great social institution, he said, "If ever I get a chance to hit that thing I'll hit it hard." What sort of thing made Jesus so courageously unreconciled to social wrong? A beggar, sick, covered with sores licked by the dogs, lying at a rich man's gate. Nothing could compensate for that in Jesus' eyes.

Indeed, do not some of *us* come home to our comfortable households and amid their pleasantness feel discomfort which will not down? In New York, only a few blocks from the homes of the privileged, one finds the slums. That is where

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I began work in this city. When first I came here as a young man, long ago, I never dreamed of standing in a place like this. I worked on the lower Bowery in the slums. What is the matter with the slums? They are unbeautiful; they are a blemish on the city—it is not that which haunts the imagination of a man who knows them. Those slums take boys and girls, good human stuff, children as fine and promising as yours or mine ever were, and day by day they do things to them one by one. No creed we could recite would interest Jesus in the least apart from this spirit: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." In the midst of a collective age I lift that test, lest we forget.

In the second place, lest we forget that, if we lose individualism, we lose universalism too. I mean that the only force which can break down prejudice, racial, national, or class, and introduce us into a decent and civilized brotherhood of man is the ability to get our eyes clearly on the individual and give him his chance to stand on the basis of his personal merit, regardless of any collective class to which he may belong. One says of a man that he is black, or brown, a Jew, a Roman Catholic, a Japanese, a German, an employer, an employee. I answer that first of all he is a person, of whom it is my business to think, and with whom it is my business to deal, as an individual. And, strangely enough, through that door of individualism, which seems to some narrow, runs the only road which leads to a decent and civilized brotherhood of man.

Whoever else may have difficulty in understanding that, the women ought to see it. I have before me a letter written by the grandfather of a friend of mine, in 1838, nearly a century ago. The writer was the son of the then-president of Dartmouth and was himself the principal of a girls' school. Listen to him as he writes to his father: "One of my young ladies will be fitted for College next fall and, were she to enter, girl though she be, would take the first rank in her class. I don't know however that any of our New England Institutions are so liberal and unprejudiced in their notions

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of equality, that they would be willing to admit her, and I fear that I shall be obliged either to send a candidate to Oberlin, or keep her myself."

Things have changed for you women in a hundred years, and the major cause, which has wrought the amazing alteration, is the fact that when we think of our daughters we do not say first, They are *women*, but first, They are *persons*, to be dealt with, not collectively as members of a class, but individually as personalities.

All history bears witness that this is the only door toward universalism in any realm. We have been speaking, for example, of the individualistic attitude of Jesus, his care for persons one by one. It sounds innocent, harmless; to some of you, perhaps, sentimental. Yet consider its amazing social consequence. For if men and women were to be individually treated, each personality standing on the basis of its own merits, then the Christian fellowship as a whole could have no race lines, no sex lines, no national lines, no class lines. The story starts innocently enough: It is not the will of your Father that one should perish. But see how it ends: Neither male nor female, neither Jew nor Greek, Scythian, barbarian, bond nor free, but one man in Christ.

If I read the newspapers aright, few things need much more to be said than does this, privately or publicly. You and I need it. To treat people always as persons, never as members of a class, and so never to have a collective prejudice—we need it. As for the world at large, see what collectivism does when it goes mad. It becomes ruthless to individuals, in one nation now absolutely ruthless to a whole race of individuals, sacrificing personality, with its right to think and live, upon the altar of a totalitarian state.

Some of you are tempted to think of such collectivism as progressive and new. Collectivism new? Upon the contrary, it is one of the oldest things in the world. That is where human society first began. Primitive tribal life was absolutely collective, mass control by custom and taboo, no individual rights, no individual conscience, no individual religion—mass mind, mass conduct, mass control. That is where human so-

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ciety started. And the crowning glory of the ages has been the emergence of the individual, his intellect, his conscience, his power and freedom to create. I beg of you Americans, never sacrifice your soul to that ancient fetish and lose the glory of the race!

Recall that I already have said that in the management of external things collectivism is often advantageous. Indeed, it may be that at the long last we shall come through to what technological prophets dream: that the entire provision of man's economic needs will be mechanized, standardized, reduced to a few hours' labor a day, taken over by society like the waterworks, and that the individual will be freed as never before in history by the collectivizing of external things. I suppose we never can tell without endless experiment how far that process may go.

At this point, however, lies the real issue. You and I are going out into a generation which will try endless collectivist experiments and, like everything else, collectivism can go mad. When it does go mad it crushes the noblest thing in human life, personality. When it goes mad enough, it builds a totalitarian state and on it, as on a Procrustean bed, stretches out all that is too short and saws off all that is too long. It builds a high altar to uniformity and slays upon it the freedom of the soul. Then, moved by mob hysteria, a whole generation is led to think that this is something new and progressive, when all the time it is a desperate endeavor to get back to the far-off place where human society first started and from which for five thousand years the individual has been trying to fight free. I wanted a chance to say that this morning—lest we forget.

The concluding matter is intimately personal. The outside of the collective process is physical standardization, which is often beneficial; the inside of the collective process is psychological standardization, which is one of the most ignoble things to which mankind can ever sink, so that in a generation like this, swept by collectivism, there are few things more important than that men should make covenant with themselves, that they will at least be individuals and have souls of their

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own. A friend of mine suggests that perhaps a man from Mars might come to earth and face us with this question: What has mankind done up to date anyway? What has the human race to show to justify its long, long history? What would you think of first in answer to that question? I know what I would think of first: individuals, select groups of individuals, the best fruit of the race, the finest thing mankind has yet to show, the pledge and promise of what humanity may be. O man of Mars, I would say, our human history has been tragic enough, filled with failures multitudinous, but it has not been altogether barren. Scientists have grown here, great personalities whose intellects have unrolled the universe before our wondering eyes. Seers and singers, poets, artists, builders have grown here, their spirits crying before the gates of beauty,

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory will come in.

And characters have grown here, beautiful as though an artist had made them, some of them saints and sages who have unveiled to us the world invisible, some martyrs and pioneers,

Lonely antagonists of Destiny,
That went down scornful before many spears.

Such individuals have been the glory of the race, and when in humbler fashion men and women like ourselves have souls of their own, independent minds, unconsenting consciences, inner lives hid with Christ in God, rich and real, that glory shines again and helps to justify the travail of the centuries.

Sometimes, when the mood is on me, this noisy world of politics and blustering circumstance fades out and nothing is left except individuals. Around the globe they stretch, woven by personal ties, each to each, in a vast network. From soul to soul, like nerves the channels run, multitudinous and intimate. And when in this vast, interlacing nervous system of humanity a real personality arises, lo! at the last, throughout the length and breadth of the world's life, his impulse runs. He

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is an individual. He gives himself to individuals. They give themselves to others, and they to others still, and so he goes on working forever.

If ever there was a generation when this kind of thing needed to be said, it is now. Make use of collective processes by all means, but do not sell to them your soul. If by individualism we mean selfishness, this is no time for that but for public spirit and coöperation. Nevertheless, the test of everything worth while in our collective life is what happens to individuals. The road to everything worth while in our collective life is through individuals. The fountainhead of everything deep and vital in our collective life is in individuals. Take a long look at the Master and see, lest we forget!

The Use and Misuse of Power

A VERSE in Dr. Moffatt's translation of the Book of Ecclesiastes accurately describes the intent of our morning's thought. Says the ancient Jewish writer, "Thoughtfully I pondered what goes on within this world whenever men have power over their fellows." We are introduced here to an area of experience without the thoughtful pondering of which it is impossible to understand human life. No moral test can be much more severe than the temptation to misuse power over our fellows. Yet every normal human being desires to possess such control; the will to power in the human ego is universal and imperious.

Freud goes wrong when he tries to reduce all the urgent motives of the self to what he calls 'sex.' Deeper than that, interpenetrating that, and sweeping a wider range of compulsion, is another element, the will to power. Men do not usually seek money for itself; money is power. Men commonly do not seek knowledge for itself; knowledge is power. Historically the experience of love has found its thrill in no small measure in the fact that it is a conquest; it gives power over another. All the deep desires of the self which seek position, prestige, popularity, which love to sway people whether with charm of personality, strength of mind, or external possession, reveal how insistently our ego longs for power over our fellows.

We are not saying that this in itself is wrong but, rather, that the crucial test of character commonly comes at precisely the point where this strong demand of the ego begins to be satisfied. Power's possession is a heavy moral strain. For one thing, it opens the door to self-indulgence—a dangerous door to have opened. Many people cannot withstand its lure. As soon as they begin to see that door swinging wide, they walk straight in. Moreover, power's possession creates the thirst

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for more power. The feel of power in the hand that wields it is overwhelmingly attractive, so that the power habit, like the drug habit, easily impels one to seek an increase of the dose. And power's possession can unconsciously but dreadfully harden a man's heart. When one has power over his fellows, one finds it difficult to understand how his fellows live and then, later, one may find it difficult to care how they live. Another phrase from the Old Testament, in the prophecies of Micah, Dr. Moffatt has translated thus :

Woe to men who on their beds
some mischief plan,
and carry it out when morning comes,
because they can !

That is an obligato on what an endless series of ruthless deeds—"because they can" !

Here, then, is a fact of incalculable significance to personal and social life. Every young person here today desires power, and the forms in which you seek it may be so wholesome that all of us would heartily wish you success ; only, we who are older know this also, that the day when you possess it will be not the end but the beginning of your problem.

At this point we run into an interesting contrast between the habitual attitude of Jesus and of ourselves. We constantly marvel at people who win spiritual victory despite adversity. How do they do it ? we say. Starting with so little, cramped by penury of circumstance, overcoming powerful obstacles, and yet despite it all carrying off a spiritual triumph—how do they do it ? But Jesus habitually marveled at people who carried off a spiritual victory in spite of prosperity. How can they do that ? said he. How can a rich man enter the kingdom of God ? he cried ; "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye." The rich man has such power over his fellows, the doors are so open to self-indulgence, the possession of power gives such opportunity to grasp more power, and riches so separate a man from understanding and sympathizing with his fellows—how can one, said Jesus, win *that* victory ? Indeed, the Master marveled so at such a tri-

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umph that at the end of his discussion of it he said in explanation, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Here is an interesting contrast between Jesus and ourselves. Jesus had thoughtfully pondered, as perhaps we have not, what goes on within this world whenever men have power over their fellows.

We cannot, however, push this matter off into a corner as though it applied to one class of people only, like the rich. Obviously it concerns every one of us. Nothing, for example, gives one such intimate, interior, and dominant power over another as love. When we are loved, we are trusted with terrific power over our fellows, so that one who habitually deals with the confidential interests of individuals is likely to think of this first when he ponders what goes on in this world through the misuse of power. Charles Kingsley, asked the secret of his radiant and useful life, is said to have answered, "I had a friend." That is very fine, but many a bedraggled spirit comes to see the minister who, asked the secret of his sorry estate, gives precisely the same answer. He too had a friend—who misused the power that friendship gives.

Let each of us, then, get himself or herself into the center of this picture. We have power to help people, to hurt people, to lift them up, to make their days hard and their nights long-drawn-out and anxious. Let us get our thoughts for a while off our weakness. We think of that too much anyway. Let us get our minds upon our power. We have some somewhere over our fellows.

This truth applies not only to each of us but in a special sense to our generation as a whole. We are in the midst of a widespread, deep-seated revolt against misused power. The steadiness of the American people through these years of strain, their refusal to follow demagogues or trust in violence, their fortitude and sportsmanship and even good humor in desperate circumstances, seem to me beyond all praise. Nevertheless, let none of us be fooled by that. We are facing an indignant and determined revolt against misused power. In 1928 in this city, I addressed a convention of representatives of one of our greatest industries. We were then at the flood

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tide of what looked like prosperity and, under circumstances very different from today's, I spoke to them on the same subject which occupies our thought now. No nation, I tried to say, had ever been trusted with such power as we then possessed. We were the creditor nation of the world and incredibly well-to-do. When one went to a country like Arabia, the problem was penury and want. When one went to a country like China, the problem was lack—lack of food, lack of means of communication, lack of literacy. But when one came back to America, the problem was plenty. We had already passed out of the economy of want into the economy of abundance. We had means to produce more than we had use for. It was natural, I tried to say, to be self-congratulatory under such conditions, but, as a matter of fact, that was the most dangerous position which any nation could ever face. For the tragedies of history had been the tragedies of misused power. The catastrophes of history had not arisen mainly from the weak—no, from the strong. As individuals and as classes they achieved power and then, with the power they had, they grasped more power until in political or economic or military might they bestrode the world. Then they could not handle the power they had. They committed suicide with it. The terrific temptations associated with its possession were too much for them. The lust for power, the greedy employment of it, the desire to exploit rather than dedicate it, the failure of intelligence and character in handling the complicated problems presented by it—how history repeats the tragedy of misused power!

I had almost forgotten that old speech until the other day one of the men who heard it reminded me of it. "So," he said, "it came out as you feared. We mishandled our power."

This range of facts presents the most serious and most disillusioning problem which society faces. Interested in politics and believing in political organization, we see rings like Tammany Hall in New York or the Republican machine of Philadelphia or of Chicago, achieving power and then mishandling it. Enthusiastic over organized labor and collective bargaining, we see the unions possessing tremendous

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power and too often misusing it. Believing in the church and under favorable circumstance rejoicing in signs of its increasing power, whether in history or in some contemporary exhibition of mishandled strength, we feel the force of Dean Inge's biting but unfortunately true statement that every institution, even the church, ends by strangling the ideas it was founded to protect. No wonder our forefathers based the Constitution of this nation on balanced checks. Our forefathers had suffered so terribly from misused power that they dreaded it above all else.

It comes, then, straight from our tradition that we should revolt against mishandled economic power. Only one cure is possible for that revolt. The sole defense of any economic order is to make it work for the welfare of all the people. That, however, involves something deeper than external rearrangement of the economic system. No economic reorganization will work one bit better than our present methods do without something deeper, the Christianizing—let us use that word in a deep sense—the Christianizing of the meaning and use of power. Without that profound ethical transformation we may secure any kind of economic order we chance to fancy—reformed capitalism, socialism, fascism, communism—but, all alike, they will go to pieces in the end on the same rock, the misuse of power.

In trying to see what is implied in this crucial, personal and social problem, consider first how dangerous a folly it is to suppose that Christianity is primarily intended for the weak. Often we have heard that. Inadequate people, afraid of life, insufficient to deal with it, wanting comfort—Christianity is for them. They ought to go to church, we are told, and be comforted, but strong personalities, able to stand on their own feet, resolutely facing the world and successfully grappling with it—why should they want Christ? Every minister some time or other has had a strapping youth in the pride of his power talk like that. Yet all history is a continuous answer to it. We could get on fairly well, muddling along with the unchristian weak. It is not they who have drenched the world in blood and made the centuries sick with ruthless-

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ness. It is not they who on their beds some mischief plan and carry it out when morning comes, because they can. The strong have done that. So the ethic of Jesus was directed primarily at the strong. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." Power possessed, dedicated, used, and, if need be, renounced—that is the central principle of the ethic of Jesus.

That was his personal problem. He had power to handle. Indeed he did. A personality that could do what he did to the world must have had strength to manage, and even for him it was difficult. Each of the temptations, which in symbolic form he described to his disciples, concerns that. Should he turn stones into bread—that is, should he use his gifts for material ends? Should he cast himself down from the temple top expecting to be unhurt—that is, should he use spectacular methods to win easy, popular success without traveling a hard road of suffering and sacrifice? Should he fall down and worship the devil in hope of gaining the kingdoms of the world—that is, should he use violence to win an earthly dominion? There swirled the temptations of the Master, where temptation swirls in every son of man, around his power. And out of his personal problem came his characteristic ethic of dedicated strength, which Paul correctly understood: "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

You see, the Master had every reason thoughtfully to ponder what goes on within this world whenever men have power over their fellows. Remember what Pilate said to him that last hour in the Prætorium: "Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?" So! Even the crucifixion was a tragedy of misused power.

The Christian churches of this nation face no more imperative task than the persuasive presentation of this truth to the strong. Sometimes in this pulpit I am accused of neglecting the weak and their need of comfort. I am sorry. I am aware of that other side of the gospel: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." How amazingly many-sided the Master was! But the crucial prob-

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lem of this nation now is not centered in the weak; it is centered in the strong. What are we going to do with our power? Some of my very intelligent friends say that already in this nation we have entered a race between the Christianizing of power on the one side and violent class war on the other. I hope that issue is a long way off. But my friends are very serious. Look, they say, at any privileged class in history, like the kings of France from the Grand Monarch on. That was a typically privileged class in which the possession of power worked out its characteristic consequence: private luxury in the midst of public poverty, power's possession creating the thirst for more power and more power and still more, deafness to the cries of despair from the great masses of the people, blindness to the inevitable coming of a new day, stubbornness against social change that would affect their own power, until at last they had to be violently upset.

You too will see this in our time, my friends say. Go on teaching the Christian ethic to the powerful; they will not accept it. The Christian ethic means the social dedication of power, its use for the commonweal, and, if need be, its renunciation. No privileged class in history ever accepted that until it was coerced into doing so. So, they say, you will see that it will require a class war to settle this problem. There is more such talk going on in this country than many people dream.

You know what I think about war, every kind of war, and of all wars the most irretrievably sinister is a class war. If Daniel Webster, looking with dread on a possible civil war, could pray that his eyes might never rest upon "a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood," one surely would pray that about a class war. But then, you see, despite Daniel Webster's prayers, the Civil War did come and one of the reasons was that once more in history a powerful owning class would not let go. Has something like that to happen in our day? I am sure it need not happen; but I am sure also that whether it happens or not depends mainly on people like ourselves, one way or another on the privileged side of the social order. How are we going to

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handle our power? "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." How difficult it is for a man whose fingers have tasted the feel of power really to dedicate it, or, when the need arises, to renounce it for Christ's sake and man's!

Again, as we face this crucial personal and social problem, consider how clean a line our thought draws between the ethic of Christ and the ethic of the world. To have that line so cleanly drawn that there is no mistaking it is one of the deepest needs of modern Christianity. Many of us have confused Christ and the world, smoothed out the contrast between them, like chameleons have adapted our moral color to the life we crawl across, until it is difficult to tell the difference between the living of Christians and that of non-Christians.

Now, there are various ways in which one can distinguish the ethic of Jesus from the ethic of the world, but none, I suspect, cuts deeper into the quick than the one with which we are dealing. By and large, despite fine exceptions, the world as a whole is run by the power-ethic,

That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

Christ, however, stands for the love-ethic—generous, sacrificial, outgoing love expressed in dedicated power. That is a contrast. It represents a conflict which we ministers face in one experience exceedingly difficult to endure. We see youths trained in Christian families and schools, sensitive, idealistic, boys and girls who seem to us the pride of the church and the hope of the world. Then we see these young people going out from home, church, and school, those comparatively sheltered areas where the love-ethic has been fairly established, into the world at large. That is not run by the love-ethic, but by the power-ethic. So these young men and women come back to us to say, We cannot be Christian out there; that is another world; we can make the love-ethic work within certain sheltered areas like the home, but Christ is not the lord of the great world; Nietzsche is, with his ethic of power.

Sometimes we ministers are told that social questions are

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not our business. I beg of you, think that through again. To train boys and girls in the love-ethic of Jesus and then send them out into a world of war and racial prejudice and social injustice, where the love-ethic is pounded to pieces by the power-ethic of a pagan society—that will not do! The Christian church has a tremendous stake, involving its very existence, in the social question; for this world cannot permanently go on half under a love-ethic and half under a power-ethic. They are mortal enemies. One or the other in the end will win a general victory, and if at last the great world as a whole should fall under the sway of the power-ethic, that would reduce to utter futility a few individuals here and there with the love-ethic.

This, then, is the crux and conclusion of the whole matter. Our truth comes up to the doorsill of every man's conscience. I have not tried to be comforting this morning. If this sermon is not a challenge it is a failure. It challenges my own life as much as any man's. It walks straight to the doorsill of every conscience and says, You have power; what are you doing with it? More persons ruin their lives with their power than with their weakness—be sure of that! More persons help ruin their generation with their power than with their weakness—be sure of that! As for being Christians, never think of Christianity primarily as medicine for weakness. It is more than that. To be a Christian means to take in your strong hands the love-ethic and go out into this pagan world to live by it, believe in it, adventure on it, sacrifice for it, until we make it victorious in the institutions of mankind. And that is costly. Yet difficult and costly as it is, power in the hands of love is always the most beautiful thing in the world. Any kind of power—personal charm, intelligence, skill, leadership, possessions—in the hands of love is the most convincing thing in the world.

A Plea for Goodwill

NO ONE ever has succeeded or will succeed in reducing the moral ideals of Jesus to a set of rules. The Master himself was impatient with legalism; he disliked rules and never formulated any. Some people feel the lack of this; they would like an ethical dictionary to which in any situation they could turn and spell out what ought to be done. The Master, however, furnished nothing like that and circumstances have so changed since he was here that had he done so he would long since have been forgotten. One reason why he is not forgotten is that, instead of thus building fences with rules, he blazed trails with ideals and principles, trails that run out over the hills and lose themselves in the horizon, and then he called men and women to pioneer in the directions he pointed out.

One may state that with enthusiasm as though it were a great thing to have done, as indeed it was; yet, human nature being what it is, it is a dangerous thing to have done. Many people can obey rules if they have specific directions, but to be pioneers, to follow trails out into new countries, to give great principles fresh applications, to carry Christian attitudes, like brotherliness and goodwill, as far into social life as they will go—all this demands qualities in ordinary people which ordinary people do not commonly possess. In consequence, we find many so-called Christians who, on the one side, do not obey rules, because there are none, but who, on the other side, do not pioneer for the application of Christ's ideals to personal and social life. The result is that Christian morals are cursed with vagueness; they are dubious and undefined. What is it to live a Christian life? some one asks, and the answer comes too easily—The Golden Rule, or, Love your neighbor as yourself. But since neither of these really is a rule and both can be regarded as general principles, we can let them go at that. So the crux of

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Christian living with many of us lies in the fact that the principles of brotherliness, friendship, neighborly love, goodwill, being generalities, come into daily head-on collision with particular, concrete prejudices, and the prejudices win.

A teacher of dramatic art had a friendly acquaintance with a woman who one day cut her dead, and when the teacher demanded an explanation, the woman answered, "I have heard that you have a Japanese pupil." "And why," said the teacher, "should my having a Japanese pupil prevent you from speaking to me?" "Because I don't like Japanese," said the woman. "What reason have you for disliking the Japanese?" "I don't know," said the woman, "but I hate the Japanese; and," she added as she flounced out of the room, "I hate Italians." That is prejudice, irrational, emotional antipathy toward a whole group—nation, class, religion—regarded as one mass. And because such prejudices are hard and sharp-edged, our Christian generalities go to pieces on them.

So far as Christianity is concerned, this problem pushed up into the foreground when Jesus first began his ministry. On that day when he came back to Nazareth to preach the first and the last sermon that he ever preached there, the town eagerly welcomed him. He began his sermon with a message about goodwill in general.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor.

So he began, and as he proceeded they all were charmed. We read that "all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth." Just so! That is the way every one feels about goodwill in general. But Jesus, who hated sham and always wanted to push the issue through to its moral gist, knew that the place where goodwill would go to pieces in that town was on the hard edge of race prejudice. So he said that there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah but the prophet went to the help of none save to a widow of Sidon, and many lepers in Israel in the days of Elisha but only one was healed,

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Naaman the Syrian. Then the synagogue was in an uproar. No longer did they wonder at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. He had carried the message of humanity and liberality straight into the area of their prejudice and they, we read, "were all filled with wrath . . . and they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city."

It would be surprising if there were not individuals here this morning who would feel that way before we are through. I never yet have preached a forthright sermon about prejudice without having some people indignantly walk out. They would have been charmed with a discourse in general about brotherliness, set in moving and general terms, but when one carries the message of friendliness into the special areas of our prejudice we resent it. We are like the lawyer who, when Jesus asked him what the great commandments were, gave a noble answer: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . and thy neighbor as thyself." That is a high-minded answer in general. But when Jesus was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" he saw his chance to push the issue through; so he said a Samaritan, a good Samaritan, was the neighbor. That faced the lawyer with a difficult situation. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans and one wonders if the lawyer's goodwill did not go to pieces on his particular prejudice.

One often preaches, wondering just how many of his congregation are involved in his message. It may be that some of you are not involved this morning, that you have no prejudices—but I doubt it. Go through the pews of this church, come into the chancel, and is it not highly probable that every popular prejudice there is—class, national, racial, religious, personal—is somewhere here? My friends, the crux of our Christian genuineness is often to be found at that point.

Consider, for one thing, that in the light of our prejudices we can see how difficult a task goodwill faces in this world. Some of us, brought up fortunately in Christian homes and schools, at the first took goodwill for granted as the natural estate of humankind, and then afterwards were shocked,

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horrified, disillusioned by the cruelty of human life. Of course, the fact is that the ancient backgrounds of the human race, far from being characterized by extensive goodwill, were dominated by prejudice and, seen in the retrospect of ages, goodwill is a comparative newcomer, a strange adventurer across boundaries in a world filled with illwill.

One who visits the countries where our own traditions rose, like Palestine and Greece, feels the truth of this. They are little countries. They are isolated by geographical configurations. The people who once lived there had no swifter means of communication than a horse. They either made war on strangers or stayed at home, shut themselves within walled towns, and were suspicious of all strangers. At that stage of development everything unfamiliar was indicative of an enemy. To the Greeks non-Greeks were barbarians; to the Jews non-Jews were 'goyim,' outlanders. So our traditions go back to a time when everything strange—strange speech, strange clothes, strange color, strange customs—denoted an enemy.

It is in the light of such a situation that one must understand the New Testament's account of Peter's difficulty in calling on a Gentile. Peter would have insisted that he was a Christian. He would have died for Jesus. One of the first and best sermons preached in my time, he might have said, in defense of the Messiahship of Jesus, I preached myself. But all such talk about his personal devotion and his theology would have gotten him nowhere in this new emergency he was facing. He was asked to visit a Gentile who was inquiring about Christianity. Now, Peter in all his life had never called upon a Gentile. At that point his Christianity came into collision with his prejudice. All honor to him because, so many centuries ago, his Christianity won the day! As he said to Cornelius later, after he had crossed the racial barricade and found a friend upon the other side: "Unto me hath God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean." That was Peter's second conversion, and there is no genuine Christianity without it.

We are living now in a time when the malevolence of

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racial prejudice is obvious and menacing. Mr. H. G. Wells is at least a keen critic of contemporary civilization and he is quoted as saying this: "I am convinced myself that there is no more evil thing in this present world than race prejudice, none at all. I write deliberately—it is the worst single thing in life now. It justifies and holds together more baseness, cruelty and abomination than any other sort of error in the world." Events today are proving that. Nevertheless, there is encouragement in looking on goodwill as a strange adventurer in a world long dominated and still dominated by ill-will.

For example, some people today are utterly cast down because it is proving to be so difficult to work out, establish, and give victory to international goodwill. But, my friends, the very word 'international' was never heard of in the English language until Jeremy Bentham invented it in 1780. The word 'international' never passed over from England to France until about 1840 and it appeared for the first time in the dictionary of the French Academy in 1877, when I, for example, was minus one year old. Across numberless ages mankind in segregated geographical localities worked out its inveterate differences, with all their accompanying prejudices—deep-seated prejudices of color, custom, and religion—gathering around them the strongest emotions of the human heart. And now in a few centuries we are suddenly poured together, forced to live in a physical proximity for which we are not prepared by spiritual sympathy. The wonder is not prejudice; the wonder is that we have gone as far as we have with goodwill.

Surely, one must feel *that* when one thinks of the Negro problem. For ages in Africa one race worked out its inveterate peculiarities and for ages another race in Europe and America worked out its inveterate peculiarities, and then of a sudden the two races were poured together by the white man's avarice and cruelty. Prejudice is not the marvel; goodwill is. Booker T. Washington describes the initial stimulus for his lifework thus: "I count it a part of my good fortune to have been thrown, early in my life in

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Alabama, in contact with such a man as Captain Howard. After knowing him I said to myself: 'If, under the circumstances, a white man can learn to be fair to my race instead of hating it, a black man ought to be able to return the compliment.' " So a Southern gentleman poured friendliness into a very difficult situation and awakened a responsive goodwill in Booker Washington, which, I suspect, was the greatest contribution that that Southern gentleman ever had an opportunity to make to civilization.

The whole matter, therefore, comes back to our own doorsills one by one. Here is a world, long dominated by prejudice, where the only hope is goodwill. There are no rules about it. It is an adventure. Carry goodwill out as far as you can make it go; experiment with it every day; believe in it and keep on trying it, even when you have hard luck applying it—that is being a Christian. I suppose that the audible singing of angels over Bethlehem is a beautiful legend, but legends can tell truth as important as historical fact can. The coming of Jesus did mean what the angels sang, and no church a man belongs to and no creed he recites can make him a Christian unless he enters into that spirit:

Glory to God on high;
And on the earth peace,
Good will among men!

In the second place, consider that by such goodwill as we achieve and express we profit more than do the people on whom we expend it. Prejudice impoverishes its possessor—that is a neglected truth. When a supercilious man shuts himself up in his special set, he thinks he is excluding the world from the fellowship of his valuable self but he is really excluding himself from the fellowship of the valuable world. He is making not the world but himself poor, closing doors against kindling contacts and enriching fellowships which come only to those who know that all boundaries can be crossed by friendliness. Cornelius, one suspects, was no more benefited by fraternizing with Peter than Peter was by fraternizing with Cornelius. Peter may have thought he

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was conferring a favor on Cornelius but afterwards, let us hope, he awoke to the fact that the whole Gentile world of incalculable spiritual wealth had been opened to him. If he had stayed at home with his prejudice he would have starved himself.

How many travelers will go abroad this summer covered all over with the self-protection of inveterate prejudice! Nothing that is different from Main Street, U. S. A., will reach their understanding. They will think that all Britishers are funny when they talk, all Frenchmen wicked, the Italians unwashed, the Greeks ignorant, the Japanese heathen, the Chinese dreadful. They will come back tattooed like sailors with superficial impressions but not inwardly enriched. If they had had a little more appreciation, how much more they might have seen! They might even have had lasting friendships in every country that they visited. Prejudice is like indigestion; it prevents a man from assimilating anything.

Of course, I can understand some one saying that he does not intend to go through life lavishing sentimental goodwill on every person he meets. Some people, he says, are evil and ugly; what is the use pretending they are not? Well, did Jesus pretend they were not? Jesus' kindness was very beautiful but I can think of no one whose searching, discriminating, hard-headed judgment a man would fear more. He met, I suspect, all the kinds of human stupidity and ugliness there are. I do not mean simply the brutality of people like those who crucified him. I mean the selfish stupidity of folk who make human life seem hopelessly dull and drab and who take the heart out of a man who tries to do something worth while in the world.

Once when Jesus had finished an elevated discourse, a man rushed up to him and said—what do you think he said after listening to the Master's immortal words?—"Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." There are such people, who would hurry to the supreme teacher, just finishing the utterance of great truths, and say that! Professor William Lyon Phelps tells me that, after Lincoln had

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finished his memorable words in the Second Inaugural, one man pushed through the crowd and began pleading with him for a post-office appointment. There are people like that. I wonder if Jesus did not have more difficulty in forgiving them than in forgiving the people who crucified him. At any rate, the most terrific words the Master ever uttered he spoke about them—casting pearls before swine. After *that* you cannot call him a sentimentalist. He was not. But he was a tireless experimenter with goodwill. The phrase of Jesus which never has possessed clear meaning to some of us, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," gets concrete, livable significance now in Dr. Torrey's translation, based on the original Aramaic which Jesus spoke: "Be therefore all-including (in your good will), even as your heavenly Father includes all." So Jesus was a tireless experimenter with all-including goodwill. He would talk, not only with a Samaritan woman but with a second-rate specimen of one, and in doing it and discovering that goodwill was working, he would forget that he was tired and hungry and say to his solicitous disciples, "I have meat to eat that ye know not." He knew how rich goodwill can make a life.

Some of us here are endlessly grateful for our own sakes for such amity as we have managed to achieve and express. Japan is adventuring on dangerous foreign policies but it never would occur to us to mass all Japanese together any more than we would do so with all Americans. We have friends in Japan, peace-lovers, anti-militarists, fighting the policies of war there as we are here. India has ancient and profound problems to meet, but blanket condemnations of India we know to be unfair. We have friends there, fighting evils like child marriage as we here are fighting evils like lynching. We know that the problem of the Ghetto Jew, long isolated and oppressed, is serious wherever it arises, but we have too many high-minded Jewish friends ever to let that cruel abomination, anti-Semitism, get a foothold in our minds. We are far from being Roman Catholics but some of the noblest, finest friends and fellow citizens we

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have are Roman Catholics. Alas for the man who thinks, as Richard Baxter said, that his closet is the whole house! It is not. The house of mankind has many rooms and it is only a humane man who grows rich by the freedom of them all.

Once more, consider that even though goodwill be a comparatively new adventurer, the future belongs to it if there is to be any future worth having. We sometimes hear it said that science denies religion. That seems to me nonsense. Science does not deny—it demands—religion. It is science that has thrown across these ancient, segregating boundaries the new, reticulated meshworks of intercommunication so that willy-nilly we have to live together. It is science that has forced on us these close proximities so that the United States and China are closer together now than Massachusetts and Georgia were when the Constitution of this nation was written. And if we cannot match what science is doing on the outside with the religion of goodwill on the inside, we are done for. As Jesus said about Capernaum, though we be exalted unto heaven, we shall go down unto Hades.

Indeed, this fact reveals the essential nature of prejudice. It is the expression of a belated mind. Dress it up in such rationalizations as we may devise, national and racial prejudice is a belated left-over from an ancient world of isolations, where prejudice was protective, into a modern world of proximities, where prejudice is destructive. So when you hear a man say that he hates Jews, or Negroes, or Roman Catholics, or what not, you are listening to a belated mind. He may think himself modern, may ride in motor cars, possess a radio, and take trips around the world, but his mind is properly dated B. C. Long ago the old barricades began to crumble. The Roman Empire poured many nations into one melting pot. The ancient Christian church tried to organize them into a spiritual kingdom, saying, Neither Jew nor Greek, neither Scythian nor barbarian, bond or free, but one man in Christ. For a century and more, now, science has been weaving us into one neighborhood, and many have said, like Dante, "As for us, our fatherland is the world."

A PLEA FOR GOODWILL

Yet we have multitudes of belated minds still poisoning life with prejudice.

This kind of straight speaking belongs particularly in the pulpit because prejudice is never so poisonous as when it is religious. Strange, isn't it? that no vice ever reaches its climax of viciousness until it is mixed with something fine and beautiful! That is universally true. War, for example, is bad enough in any form, even with bows and arrows, but the more war is mixed with intelligence the worse it becomes. So prejudice is at its worst when it is religious.

A family began talking about a certain minister and as his name was mentioned the teeth of an elderly aunt began to click. When some of the younger generation expressed appreciation of him, they clicked even more audibly and at last, unable to repress herself longer, she said, "The trouble with that minister is that his sermons are just as good for Roman Catholics and Jews as for Baptists." So! "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"—just as good for Roman Catholics and Jews as for Baptists. "While he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" and said, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found"—just as good for Roman Catholics and Jews as for Baptists.

During the Great War a Roman Catholic chaplain went out under fire to minister to a boy who lay dying in No Man's Land. As he came close, the boy said, "Padre, I do not belong to your church." "No," said the padre, as he knelt down, "but you do belong to my God." That is a right thing to say. It does not mean giving up conviction. Let every man of us say, I have strong convictions; may you have yours; you do not, then, belong to my church but you do belong to my God. For we go back now to a world filled with prejudice, where only goodwill can help, and there is not a day when you and I cannot join in that most important movement in the world—pushing goodwill out, across all boundaries, as far as we can make it go.

*The Unknown Soldier**

IT WAS an interesting idea to deposit the body of an unrecognized soldier in the national memorial of the Great War, and yet, when one stops to think of it, how strange it is! Yesterday, in Rome, Paris, London, Washington, and how many capitals beside, the most stirring military pageantry, decked with flags and exultant with music, centered about the bodies of unknown soldiers. That is strange. So this is the outcome of Western civilization, which for nearly two thousand years has worshiped Christ, and in which democracy and science have had their widest opportunity, that the whole nation pauses, its acclamations rise, its colorful pageantry centers, its patriotic oratory flourishes, around the unrecognizable body of a soldier blown to bits on the battlefield. That is strange.

It was the war lords themselves who picked him out as the symbol of war. So be it! As a symbol of war we accept him from their hands.

You may not say that I, being a Christian minister, did not know him. I knew him well. From the north of Scotland, where they planted the sea with mines, to the trenches of France, I lived with him and his fellows—British, Australian, New Zealander, French, American. The places where he fought, from Ypres through the Somme battlefield to the southern trenches, I saw while he still was there. I lived with him in his dugouts in the trenches, and on destroyers searching for submarines off the shores of France. Short of actual battle, from training camp to hospital, from the fleet to No Man's Land, I, a Christian minister, saw the war. Moreover, I, a Christian minister, participated in it. I too was persuaded that it was a war to end war. I too was a gullible fool and thought that modern war could somehow make the world safe for democracy. They sent men like me to explain

* An Armistice Day Sermon.

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to the army the high meanings of war and, by every argument we could command, to strengthen their morale. I wonder if I ever spoke to the Unknown Soldier.

One night, in a ruined barn behind the lines, I spoke at sunset to a company of hand-grenaders who were going out that night to raid the German trenches. They told me that on the average no more than half a company came back from such a raid, and I, a minister of Christ, tried to nerve them for their suicidal and murderous endeavor. I wonder if the Unknown Soldier was in that barn that night.

Once in a dugout which in other days had been a French wine cellar I bade Godspeed at two in the morning to a detail of men going out on patrol in No Man's Land. They were a fine company of American boys fresh from home. I recall that, huddled in the dark, underground chamber, they sang,

Lead, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on.
The night is dark, and I am far from home,—
Lead thou me on.

Then, with my admonitions in their ears, they went down from the second- to the first-line trenches and so out to No Man's Land. I wonder if the Unknown Soldier was in that dugout.

You here this morning may listen to the rest of this sermon or not, as you please. It makes much less difference to me than usual what you do or think. I have an account to settle in this pulpit today between my soul and the Unknown Soldier.

He is not so utterly unknown as we sometimes think. Of one thing we can be certain: he was sound of mind and body. We made sure of that. All primitive gods who demanded bloody sacrifices on their altars insisted that the animals should be of the best, without mar or hurt. Turn to the Old Testament and you find it written there: "Whether male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before Jehovah." The

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god of war still maintains the old demand. These men to be sacrificed upon his altars were sound and strong. Once there might have been guessing about that. Not now. Now we have medical science, which tests the prospective soldier's body. Now we have psychiatry, which tests his mind. We used them both to make sure that these sacrifices for the god of war were without blemish. Of all insane and suicidal procedures, can you imagine anything madder than this, that all the nations should pick out their best, use their scientific skill to make certain that they are the best, and then in one mighty holocaust offer ten million of them on the battlefields of one war?

I have an account to settle between my soul and the Unknown Soldier. I deceived him. I deceived myself first, unwittingly, and then I deceived him, assuring him that good consequence could come out of that. As a matter of hard-headed, biological fact, what good can come out of that? Mad civilization, you cannot sacrifice on bloody altars the best of your breed and expect anything to compensate for the loss.

Of another thing we may be fairly sure concerning the Unknown Soldier—that he was a conscript. He may have been a volunteer but on an actuarial average he probably was a conscript. The long arm of the nation reached into his home, touched him on the shoulder, saying, You must go to France and fight. If some one asks why in this "land of the free" conscription was used, the answer is, of course, that it was necessary if we were to win the war. Certainly it was. And that reveals something terrific about modern war. We cannot get soldiers—not enough of them, not the right kind of them—without forcing them. When a nation goes to war now, the entire nation must go. That means that the youth of the nation must be compelled, coerced, conscripted to fight.

When you stand in Arlington before the tomb of the Unknown Soldier on some occasion, let us say, when the panoply of military glory decks it with music and color, are you thrilled? I am not—not any more. I see there the memorial of one of the saddest things in American history, from the

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continued repetition of which may God deliver us!—the conscripted boy.

He was a son, the hope of the family, and the nation coerced him. He was, perchance, a lover and the deepest emotion of his life was not desire for military glory or hatred of another country or any other idiotic thing like that, but love of a girl and hope of a home. He was, maybe, a husband and a father, and already, by that slow and beautiful gradation which all fathers know, he had felt the deep ambitions of his heart being transferred from himself to his children. And the nation coerced him. I am not blaming him; he was conscripted. I am not blaming the nation; it never could have won the war without conscription. I am simply saying that *that* is modern war, not by accident but by necessity, and with every repetition that will be more and more the attribute of war.

Last time they coerced our sons. Next time, of course, they will coerce our daughters, and in any future war they will absolutely conscript all property. Old-fashioned Americans, born out of the long tradition of liberty, some of us have trouble with these new coercions used as short cuts to get things done, but nothing else compares with this inevitable, universal, national conscription in time of war. Repeated once or twice more, it will end everything in this nation that remotely approaches liberty.

If I blame anybody about this matter, it is men like myself who ought to have known better. We went out to the army and explained to these valiant men what a resplendent future they were preparing for their children by their heroic sacrifice. O Unknown Soldier, however can I make that right with you? For sometimes I think I hear you asking me about it:

Where is this great, new era that the war was to create? Where is it? They blew out my eyes in the Argonne. Is it because of that that now from Arlington I strain them vainly to see the great gains of the war? If I could see the prosperity, plenty, and peace of my children for which this mangled body was laid down!

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My friends, sometimes I do not want to believe in immortality. Sometimes I hope that the Unknown Soldier will never know.

Many of you here knew these men better, you may think, than I knew them, and already you may be relieving my presentation of the case by another picture. Probably, you say, the Unknown Soldier enjoyed soldiering and had a thrilling time in France. The Great War, you say, was the most exciting episode of our time. Some of us found in it emotional release unknown before or since. We escaped from ourselves. We were carried out of ourselves. Multitudes were picked up from a dull routine, lifted out of the drudgery of common days with which they were infinitely bored, and plunged into an exciting adventure which they remember yet as the most thrilling episode of their careers.

Indeed, you say, how could martial music be so stirring and martial poetry so exultant if there were not at the heart of war a lyric glory? Even in the churches you sing,

Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war.

You, too, when you wish to express or arouse ardor and courage, use war's symbolism. The Unknown Soldier, sound in mind and body—yes! The Unknown Soldier a conscript—probably! But be fair and add that the Unknown Soldier had a thrilling time in France.

To be sure, he may have had. Listen to this from a wounded American after a battle. "We went over the parapet at five o'clock and I was not hit till nine. They were the greatest four hours of my life." Quite so! Only let me talk to you a moment about that. *That* was the first time he went over the parapet. Anything risky, dangerous, tried for the first time, well handled, and now escaped from, is thrilling to an excitable and courageous soul. What about the second time and the third time and the fourth? What about the dreadful times between, the long-drawn-out, monotonous, dreary, muddy barrenness of war, concerning which one who knew said, "Nine-tenths of War is Waiting"? The trouble with

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much familiar talk about the lyric glory of war is that it comes from people who never saw any soldiers except the American troops, fresh, resilient, who had time to go over the parapet about once. You ought to have seen the hardening-up camps of the armies which had been at the business since 1914. Did you ever see them? Did you look, as I have looked, into the faces of young men who had been over the top, wounded, hospitalized, hardened up—over the top, wounded, hospitalized, hardened up—over the top, wounded, hospitalized, hardened up—four times, five times, six times? Never talk to a man who has seen that about the lyric glory of war. /

Where does all this talk about the glory of war come from, anyway?

‘Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!’
Were the last words of Marmion.

That is Sir Walter Scott. Did he ever see war? Never.

And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his Gods?

That is Macaulay. Did he ever see war? He was never near one.

Storm’d at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell,
Rode the six hundred.

That is Tennyson. Did he ever see war? I should say not.

There is where the glory of war comes from. We have heard very little about it from the real soldiers of this last war. We have had from them the appalling opposite. They say what George Washington said: it is “a plague to mankind.” The glory of war comes from poets, preachers, orators, the writers of martial music, statesmen preparing flowery proclamations for the people, who dress up war for other

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men to fight. They do not go to the trenches. They do not go over the top again and again and again.

Do you think that the Unknown Soldier would really believe in the lyric glory of war? I dare you; go down to Arlington and tell him that *now*.

Nevertheless, some may say that while war is a grim and murderous business with no glory in it in the end, and while the Unknown Soldier doubtless knew that well, we have the right in our imagination to make him the symbol of whatever was most idealistic and courageous in the men who went out to fight. Of course we have. Now, let us do that! On the body of a French sergeant killed in battle was found a letter to his parents in which he said, "You know how I made the sacrifice of my life before leaving." So we think of our Unknown Soldier as an idealist, rising up in answer to a human call and making the sacrifice of his life before leaving. His country seemed to him like Christ himself, saying, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Far from appealing to his worst, the war brought out his best—his loyalty, his courage, his venturesomeness, his care for the downtrodden, his capacity for self-sacrifice. The noblest qualities of his young manhood were aroused. He went out to France a flaming patriot and in secret quoted Rupert Brooke to his own soul:

If I should die, think only this of me:

That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England.

There, you say, is the Unknown Soldier.

Yes, indeed, did you suppose I never had met him? I talked with him many a time. When the words that I would speak about war are a blistering fury on my lips and the encouragement I gave to war is a deep self-condemnation in my heart, it is of that I think. For I watched war lay its hands on these strongest, loveliest things in men and use the noblest attributes of the human spirit for what ungodly deeds! Is there anything more infernal than this, to take the

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best that is in man and use it to do what war does? This is the ultimate description of war—it is the prostitution of the noblest powers of the human soul to the most dastardly deeds, the most abysmal cruelties of which our human nature is capable. That is war.

Granted, then, that the Unknown Soldier should be to us a symbol of everything most idealistic in a valiant warrior, I beg of you, be realistic and follow through what war made the Unknown Soldier do with his idealism. Here is one eyewitness speaking:

"Last night, at an officers' mess there was great laughter at the story of one of our men who had spent his last cartridge in defending an attack. 'Hand me down your spade, Mike,' he said; and as six Germans came one by one round the end of a traverse, he split each man's skull open with a deadly blow." The war made the Unknown Soldier do *that* with his idealism.

"I can remember," says one infantry officer, "a pair of hands (nationality unknown) which protruded from the soaked ashen soil like the roots of a tree turned upside down; one hand seemed to be pointing at the sky with an accusing gesture. . . . Floating on the surface of the flooded trench was the mask of a human face which had detached itself from the skull." War harnessed the idealism of the Unknown Soldier to *that*!

Do I not have an account to settle between my soul and him? They sent men like me into the camps to awaken his idealism, to touch those secret, holy springs within him so that with devotion, fidelity, loyalty, and self-sacrifice he might go out to war. O war, I hate you most of all for this, that you do lay your hands on the noblest elements in human character, with which we might make a heaven on earth, and you use them to make a hell on earth instead. You take even our science, the fruit of our dedicated intelligence, by means of which we might build here the City of God, and, using it, you fill the earth instead with new ways of slaughtering men. You take our loyalty, our unselfishness, with which we might make the earth beautiful, and, using these our finest qualities,

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you make death fall from the sky and burst up from the sea and hurtle from unseen ambushades sixty miles away; you blast fathers in the trenches with gas while you are starving their children at home by blockades; and you so bedevil the world that fifteen years after the Armistice we cannot be sure who won the war, so sunk in the same disaster are victors and vanquished alike. If war were fought simply with evil things, like hate, it would be bad enough but, when one sees the deeds of war done with the loveliest faculties of the human spirit, he looks into the very pit of hell.

~ Suppose one thing more—that the Unknown Soldier was a Christian. Maybe he was not, but suppose he was, a Christian like Sergeant York, who at the beginning intended to take Jesus so seriously as to refuse to fight but afterward, otherwise persuaded, made a real soldier. For these Christians do make soldiers. Religion is a force. When religious faith supports war, when, as in the Crusades, the priests of Christ cry, “Deus Vult”—God wills it—and, confirming ordinary motives, the dynamic of Christian devotion is added, then an incalculable resource of confidence and power is released. No wonder the war departments wanted the churches behind them!

Suppose, then, that the Unknown Soldier was a Christian. I wonder what he thinks about war now. Practically all modern books about war emphasize the newness of it—new weapons, new horrors, new extensiveness. At times, however, it seems to me that still the worst things about war are the ancient elements. In the Bible we read terrible passages where the Hebrews thought they had command from Jehovah to slaughter the Amalekites, “both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.” Dreadful! we say, an ancient and appalling idea! Ancient? Appalling? Upon the contrary, that is war, and always will be. A military order, issued in our generation by an American general in the Philippines and publicly acknowledged by his counsel afterwards in a military court, commanded his soldiers to burn and kill, to exterminate all capable of bearing arms, and to make the island of Samar a howling wilderness. Moreover, his counsel

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acknowledged that he had specifically named the age of ten with instructions to kill every one over that. Far from launching into a denunciation of that American general, I am much more tempted to state his case for him. Why not? Cannot boys and girls of eleven fire a gun? Why not kill everything over ten? That is war, past, present, and future. All that our modern fashions have done is to make the necessity of slaughtering children not the comparatively simple and harmless matter of shooting some of them in Samar, one by one, but the wholesale destruction of children, starving them by millions, impoverishing them, spoiling the chances of unborn generations of them, as in the Great War.

My friends, I am not trying to make you sentimental about this. I want you to be hard-headed. We can have this monstrous thing or we can have Christ, but we cannot have both. O my country, stay out of war! Coöperate with the nations in every movement that has any hope for peace; enter the World Court, support the League of Nations, contend undiscourageably for disarmament, but set your face steadfastly and forever against being drawn into another war. O church of Christ, stay out of war! Withdraw from every alliance that maintains or encourages it. It was not a pacifist, it was Field-Marshal Earl Haig who said, "It is the business of the churches to make my business impossible." And O my soul, stay out of war!

At any rate, I will myself do the best I can to settle my account with the Unknown Soldier. I renounce war. I renounce war because of what it does to our own men. I have watched them coming gassed from the front-line trenches. I have seen the long, long hospital trains filled with their mutilated bodies. I have heard the cries of the crazed and the prayers of those who wanted to die and could not, and I remember the maimed and ruined men for whom the war is not yet over. I renounce war because of what it compels us to do to our enemies, bombing their mothers in villages, starving their children by blockades, laughing over our coffee cups about every damnable thing we have been able to do to them. I renounce war for its consequences, for the lies it

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lives on and propagates, for the undying hatreds it arouses, for the dictatorships it puts in the place of democracy, for the starvation that stalks after it. I renounce war and never again, directly or indirectly, will I sanction or support another! O Unknown Soldier, in penitent reparation I make you that pledge.

*An Interpretation of
Pacifism*

THE purpose of this sermon is not primarily to argue pacifism so as to persuade others to accept it, but to interpret pacifism so that at least we may understand it. Recently twenty thousand American ministers of religion answered a questionnaire, and of that number nearly thirteen thousand said that they would never sanction or, as armed combatants, participate in another war. Surely, that indicates a movement of thought and feeling in the religious community which at least we ought to understand. What, then, are these thirteen thousand ministers driving at?

Some would wish it said at once that they are recovering one of the original meanings of discipleship to Jesus. When the appalling drift of the modern world toward war is pointed out and we are told that it is mad to propose individual renunciation of a share in the conflict when it comes, the first answer is that Christianity started in just such a situation and the early Christians did refuse individual participation in war at the cost of death. As one scholar has put it, "The early Christian church was the first peace society." To Justin Martyr, born about 114 A. D., the spirit of war and the spirit of Jesus seemed absolutely irreconcilable. Tertullian, born about 145, saw no way for a Christian to be a soldier and keep his conscience clear. Cyrian, born about 200, called war "wholesale murder." From 60 to 170 A. D. no Christian soldier is known to have existed, but there are indications of a number of instances where Christians refused arms, took death as punishment, saying simply, "I am a Christian, and therefore I cannot fight."

After that, however, came the growing political power of Christianity, until at last the imperial household of Constantine accepted it. Then Christianity joined with the state, forgot its earlier attitudes, became sponsor of war, blessing of

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war, cause of war, and fighter of war. Down through the centuries the church has come, too often trying to carry the cross of Jesus in one hand and a dripping sword in the other. As Christians now look at the appalling consequence, the conviction rises that we had better turn back to our first traditions and see whether those early disciples of Jesus were not more nearly right than we have been.

The fact, however, that the early Christians were pacifists is no sufficient answer to the searching questions which some people would like to ask of those thirteen thousand ministers.

For example, personal renunciation of war seems to us, some would say, merely negative. It is no adequate solution of the problem. To get this man here and that man there individually to renounce war is a gesture with no large effect, and when war comes again such individual renunciations will be swept along like straws on a roaring flood. To substitute sane methods of peaceful coöperation for insane methods of bloody violence in international relationships is an infinitely more complicated and difficult business than personal pacifism suggests—with which, if I know those thirteen thousand ministers at all, they would with one accord agree. You are right, they would say; individual renunciation of war is no adequate solution of the problem.

What is it that the nations basically want? They want security. A friend of mine, just returned from Europe, says that all Europe seems to be plunging headlong into war but that nobody there wants it. What is this haunting demon that so drives millions of people into war when they do not want it? Its name is fear. Not hate! Men do not go to war in the first instance because of hate. Hate comes afterward. Fear comes first. They are afraid that they are not secure.

Now, the old method of achieving a sense of security was to arm oneself to the teeth. Individuals used to do that; nations do that yet. Down from the ancient world with its isolated localities, its walled towns, its bows and arrows, has come the idea that armed preparedness is the way to achieve a sense of security. Look out on this modern world, however, armed as nations never have been armed in all their history,

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and tell me where armed preparedness is bringing to anybody a sense of security. It will not do to say that armed preparedness once brought it. There are innumerable ideas which once worked that work no longer, and this is one of them. As another puts it, you can do almost anything with bayonets except sit down on them. So the more armed preparedness there is in the world, the fewer places are left where anybody can sit down with a sense of security. Underline this. *Armed preparedness is not the cure of international fear. Armed preparedness is one of the major causes of international fear. The more armed preparedness there is in the world, the more fear there is. The modern war system in this present world has completely broken down as a means of achieving security.*

It was because everybody with active intelligence began to see this that at the close of the Great War such desperate endeavors were made to substitute for the war system peaceful bases of security in the World Court and the League of Nations. When the name of the League, in particular, is mentioned now, everybody registers a sense of failure, to which I always wish to say, Of course failure! Along with many notable successes, the League has sustained a large proportion of failures. Why not? Here is the basic and ancient need of nations—security. Here is the ancient way of achieving it—war, with all the ideas, loyalties, and glammers that for ages have been associated with it as a heroic bringer of security. And now we have to change all that, shift the whole world's idea of what security involves and the whole world's technique of seeking it. Any man who supposed that mankind could blow on its hands and make a success of that colossal task at the first try was too optimistic. Any man who lies down because it was not a success at the first try, is too easily disheartened. It looks now as though a large area of humanity would plunge into another war, but be sure of this: though they do that twice or thrice, they will come back to the same unescapable fact—there is no security any more for anybody in the war system. What the World Court and the League of Nations were aiming at some day must be done.

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These thirteen thousand ministers and their allies, far from thinking that individual renunciation of war is an adequate solution of the problem, are pledged to the support of all public peace movements, the removal of the causes of war, and the prevention of war, as few others can be. For consider! If another war comes, some of us, denouncing it and refusing to support it, may go to prison. There have been days when even in war time one could denounce a war. Men like Daniel Webster in the Senate, men like Theodore Parker in the pulpit, denounced the Mexican War and American newspapers carried editorials like this: "If there is in the United States a heart worthy of American liberty, its impulse is to join the Mexicans." Such freedom in war time is long since gone. Now when war comes, a whole nation is fought against, so the whole nation has to fight; therefore conscription—conscription of our bodies, of our sons, in the next war, one way or another, of our daughters, of our property and, through all and climaxing all, of our consciences. It is here we dig in our heels. Our forefathers went to the lions rather than burn incense of worship before Cæsar. If need be, we will follow in their train. We have watched this principle of conscription under the dire necessities of modern war creep up on us, here a little and there a little, until it invades the very sanctuary of a man's soul and seizes what belongs to God alone, his conscience. Understand, therefore, that some of us, if war comes, face about the unpleasantest thing that a man can face—not going to the trenches; no, that is bad enough but that is not the worst—refusing to go to the trenches and being treated as a traitor. Believe me! We do not think that our personal renunciation of war is an adequate solution. By all the stake of our selfish interests we are pledged to work for the prevention of war. If war comes again, no matter what we do then, it will be a sign of our failure now to provide international substitutes for it.

Moreover, we hope and think that these personal renunciations of war may prove to be not so negative a gesture as some suppose. Recently I have been having an interesting experience. A message renouncing war which I had delivered

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from this pulpit I delivered from another platform, and by some accident of publicity it was caught up and carried across the country in a flood of newspaper reports. In all my life I never have met such a response, and in that stream of messages ninety-nine per cent are enthusiastic in support. For thirty years I have been preaching in college chapels but never have I seen a college audience so far forget the common proprieties as to break into a sermon with applause. A few weeks ago, however, in one of the greatest university chapels in the country, when the uncompromising pledge against war was made, the whole chapel broke out in applause. If enough people feel that way about war, the fact itself will hold back war. There always is another way out beside war, if any nation wants it earnestly enough and starts early enough to find it, and any government, facing the uncompromising, incorrigible unwillingness of unknown millions of its citizens to be used as cannon fodder or to let their sons' lives be sacrificed to make good, it may be, a campaign of the Hearst newspapers on behalf of war, will find a way to peace.

At any rate, enough of us, feeling this unchristian shame and sin of war, can keep this nation out of war. On quite unidealistic and practical grounds have we not had enough of trying to rake the world's chestnuts out of the fire with the bodies of our boys and the property of our people? These thirteen thousand ministers do not think that their renunciation of war is an idle gesture. Shared by enough people it may yet prove to be the last line of defense against another war.

There is, however, another question which many would ask of those thirteen thousand ministers. Wouldn't you defend your nation if attacked? You would defend your homes. If the forces of law and order broke down and ruffians invaded your household, you would protect your family. Wouldn't you do that for your nation? How can you say that you will never support another war when it might be a war of self-defense?

Over eight thousand of the ministers, answering the questionnaire, said they were convinced that the old distinction

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between aggressive and defensive war had broken down in the modern world. It ought not to be difficult to understand what they mean. In the last war every nation said it was defending itself. Germany and Austria, France and Russia, Great Britain, the United States, and Japan—we all said we were fighting a defensive war. Moreover, we all were. No modern nation is comprehended within its geographical boundary lines. Every nation is scattered over the world in the persons of its citizens, in its markets and investments, in the sources of the raw materials on which its industries depend, so that any nation anywhere, fighting any war, can call it a defensive war and always will call it that.

When, therefore, we are asked if we would not fight in a defensive war we know we are being asked if we would not fight in any war that came along. No nation will ever fight a war which it does not call defensive. We would question our questioners, therefore: What do you mean, 'defensive war'?—sacrificing a million American boys because an economic interest is at stake in Europe or a market is endangered in Asia? That is what your next defensive war will be like.

One test of defensive war, dear to the heart of President Roosevelt, would get us somewhere on this difficult question if the nations would agree to it. I mean that every nation should pledge itself never to cross its geographical boundary lines with a military force; that the nations should stand on their boundary lines to defend them all they wish to, but never cross with a military force; and to show that they mean not to cross in aggressive war, they should disarm themselves of all offensive weapons with which they could cross. Let them keep defensive weapons but disarm themselves of all offensive weapons—mobile artillery, tanks, military airplanes, wide-ranging cruisers. Well, are the nations doing that? They are not. Do the nations mean anything like that? They do not. When they say 'defensive war,' does that term now signify anything distinguishable from 'aggressive war'? It does not. It means the same thing.

As for the idea which, strangely enough, still occupies the imaginings of some people that a nation might decide to

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ravage continental United States with war and might cross the ocean to do it—that is so extremely improbable that anybody who bases his attitude toward war on such a prospect rules himself out from intelligent discussion. One might almost as well debate one's attitude toward war on the prospect of a hostile invasion of this planet from Mars. Now, if an enemy from Mars invades this planet, we undoubtedly will defend ourselves. And if, sometime, from somewhere, a nation crosses thousands of miles of ocean and begins a triumphal march from the Alleghanies to the Rockies, we undoubtedly will do the same thing. But that is an impossibility and every sane person knows it. That is not the live issue. That is a red herring and, what is more, it is a red herring which has been a long time dead. Even when one thinks of Hawaii and Alaska, the chance of a direct assault upon this nation's territory is in the highest degree improbable.

Those thirteen thousand ministers think they know where the live issue is. Let me try to state it for them. Of all people in this country we, as much as any, would like to defend the nation. To do that we would gladly lay down our lives. But what is the great evil against which all national life needs most to be defended? The war system, its causes, its operations, and its results. One grows indignant with people who keep talking about defending the nation *by* war when it is as plain as a pikestaff that the real issue lies in defending the nation *against* war. How can a man have lived through this last great conflict and still suppose that war defends anything or anybody? Ten million known-dead soldiers, three million presumed-dead soldiers, thirteen million dead civilians, twenty million wounded, three million prisoners, nine million war orphans, five million war widows, ten million refugees—who was defended by the war? And now we, the so-called victors, fifteen years after it was supposed to be over, sit in the pit of our disaster which that war helped to dig, millions of our families destitute, the doors of opportunity closed against their children, here in the wealthiest city in the world one person out of every six the object of public charity. If any man wants to defend his nation, let

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him get his eye on the real enemy, the war system, with all the social and economic evils that lead up to it and issue from it.

In this I am sure I am pleading not for visionary idealism but for a hard-headed attitude toward realistic facts. It is the belated mind which keeps thinking of other nations as our enemies—of what Germany or Japan might do to us. My friends, what Germany or Japan *might* do to us is negligible compared to what the war system *is* doing to us. There is the real enemy. Still through the misled imaginations of the people march the military establishments carrying banners inscribed with stirring mottoes like "For Home and Fatherland." The war system has no right to those banners any more. The war system is not the defender of any home or any fatherland. The war system is the chief enemy of every home and every fatherland. What we thirteen thousand ministers and our friends would like to do is to snatch those banners from the hands which so long and so undeservingly have carried them and put them where they belong, into the hands of the peacemakers. It is the peacemakers, not the war-makers, who defend the nation. It is the peacemakers who are for home and fatherland.

This does not of necessity involve doctrinaire pacifism of the absolutist sort, denying the legitimacy of all coercion. The overwhelming number of these ministers, I am sure, are not doctrinaire pacifists, and to them, as to all level-headed men, the necessity of force is obvious. To argue, however, as one contemporary bishop does, that if we consent to the use of coercion by the police we may not stop in our support of force short of backing war, seems to us absurd. Because one believes in the use of force in handling criminals and imbeciles, must one believe in dueling or gladiatorial combats, or the use of torture to elicit testimony? Force can be used in ways necessary and beneficent or in ways hideous and destructive. To lump all coercion in one category is to deny the first use of intellect, which is discrimination, and, as a matter of fact, no one carries that fatuous idea into thoroughgoing practise. Many, however, use it as an argument for war, whether be-

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tween nations or economic classes. They start with some obvious employment of force and then slide down into consent to war as though that were logically implied. Yet the historic fact is plain that a large area of human progress has been achieved by segregating special uses of violent coercion—from bloody combats in the amphitheater to judicial torture—and eliminating those. So we stand against the war system. It is a highly specialized, hideous use of force, differentiated from all other forms of coercion. It must go, as dueling went, and those who will risk everything in their stand against it are the real defenders of the nation.

There is at least one more question which presses for answer. Granting, some would say, that personal renunciation of war is idealistic and beautiful, still in view of the realistic facts, isn't it a sentimental attitude which a hard-headed man cannot take? To which I answer that the most hard-headed statement of the issue I know is G. Lowes Dickinson's, "If mankind does not end war, war will end mankind. This has not been true in the past. But it is true in the present." That is the realistic issue.

Indeed, let me speak for those thirteen thousand ministers, saying frankly where it seems to us the real sentimentality lies—in the popular consent to war and glorification of it, resonant with martial music, exultant with windy oratory, decked with flags, and beautiful with color. That is the craziest sentimentality on earth. This year, when we cannot feed the starving, the nations of the earth are spending \$4,500,000,000 on armament. Columbia University is one of the greatest and wealthiest in the world. On an average during the last war, we burned up the entire endowment of Columbia University every five hours. Consider all the money which all the Christian churches of America raised for all their work at home and abroad in the great days of prosperity—during the Great War on an average we burned up more than that every three days. To glorify such economic insanity, set it to music, and deck it with color is the silliest of sentimentalities.

Moreover, modern war has become one of the hugest

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rackets on earth. Required reading for every intelligent man and woman: a recent selection of the Book of the Month Club, *Merchants of Death*, telling the story of the international munition makers! When one thinks of the millions of fine boys in our generation who marched to battle, high of heart and unselfish in patriotism, and when one thinks, on the other side, of the munition makers, the merchants of death who helped prepare the war for those boys, making billions out of their sacrifice, many of whom sold arms anywhere to anybody, regardless of patriotism, so that sons were blown to pieces by the shells which their own fathers had helped to make, one is seared with shame and turbulent with indignation. One European armament manufacturer frankly used this analogy, that just as the maker of household furniture encourages matrimony that he may have more houses to furnish, so the maker of munitions encourages war so that he may improve his market. Modern war is not glorious. It is the hugest of international rackets, and to set it to music is sheer sentimentality.

Moreover, we thirteen thousand ministers and our friends think that we are the hard-headed ones about what war actually means. Here is a typical portion of an address delivered on July 19, 1918, by an officer training a group of boys in bayonet drill. It was a good thing, said the major, to show Tommy how to kill a 'boche' and to get that delightful feeling of putting him out with a bayonet—to feel that he had finished off one of those dirty creatures that we call Germans. And he continued his adjurations thus:

You've got to get down and hook them out with a bayonet; you will enjoy that, I assure you. Get sympathy out of your head. We go out to kill. We don't care how so long as they are killed. . . . And I say to you, if you see a wounded German, shove him out and have no nonsense about it. . . . Kill them, every mother's son of them. Remember that your job is to kill them—that is the only way—exterminate the vile creatures. . . . I remember a corporal saying to me, pointing to some German prisoners close by, "Can I do these blokes in, Sir?" I said, "Please yourself." He did. When the corporal came back he said, "I felt something

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that I have never felt before. . . . I felt what it is like to kill; but it's damned hard to get it out. God! He had a belly like iron!"

That is war—not accidentally but essentially; that is the very pith of the business of war, and to set it to music and deck it with flags is the silliest of sentimentalities.

Some of us are done with that forever. We have seen with our own eyes what it means to dress a minister of Jesus Christ in uniform and send him out, even as a chaplain with the armies, not merely to do what so many suppose, serve individual wounded men in spiritual need—if that were all, there would be no question—but, as well, to bless in the name of Christ this monstrous war system, to urge men, with every Christian admonition he can think of, to the most dastardly deeds human nature is capable of as being the will of God, to put the seal of Christ's approval on the worst enemy of the human race. We mean precisely what we say: We will meet you in prison first.

Forgiveness of Sins

THE only persons to whom this message is addressed are those conscious of moral wrongdoing. If there is any hearer with no uneasy stirrings of conscience about his attitude toward anything or his relationship with anybody, then this sermon is not for him. For we are going to talk about forgiveness of sins.

Before any make up their minds, however, that they do not come within range of this subject's interest and scope, one would like to be certain that they understand what we mean by 'sin.' So often when we use that word we have in the background of our minds a specific list of gross iniquities—murder, robbery, sensuality, drunkenness. Those plainly are sins. But before any person endeavors to avoid his share in the need of forgiveness, let him add at least three categories more to that carnal list.

Let him add sins of temperament—sullenness, vindictiveness, peevishness, jealousy, bad temper. How much more prevalent they are; how much more harm they do; how much more hidden evil they reveal than even passionate sins! In Jesus' greatest parable, the Prodigal represents sins of passion, and, ruinous as they are, he did come home again. But the Elder Brother represents sins of temper. With the Prodigal home, the house alight, music playing, dancing on, it is written of the Elder Brother that "he was angry, and would not go in." Bad temper, sullen, envious, bitter—that, as Jesus saw, keeps some people from the Father's house more hopelessly than sins of passion do.

If any one seeks to avoid his share in the need of forgiveness, let him add also sins of social attitude. As one of our leading sociologists has said, "The master iniquities of our time are connected with money-making." When one watches our economic system in operation, one sees how easily a man, friendly enough with individuals whom he meets, can

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enforce hard practises through a great organization which does more harm, works more misery, ruins more families over a wider area, than he, by his individual friendliness, ever can make up for. Cavour, the statesman, working on the unification of Italy, and using every political trick that he could think of to achieve his ends, said once to his confrères, "If we were to do for ourselves what we are doing for Italy, we should be great rogues." Just so! There are many great and small rogues today who do evil for political and economic organizations that they never would think of doing for themselves.

Nor should any one try to escape his share in the need of forgiveness until he has added to the list sins of neglect. It is not alone the things we do; it is the things we leave undone that haunt us—the letters we did not write, the words we did not speak, the opportunity we did not take. How insistently Jesus stressed the importance of this type of evil! What was the matter with the man who hid his one talent in a napkin? What did he do? That was the trouble—he did nothing; he missed his chance. What was the trouble with the priest and the Levite who left the victim on the road? What did they do? That was the difficulty—they did nothing; they went by on the other side.

Sins of the flesh, sins of temper, sins of social attitude, sins of neglect—I suppose there must be others, but this ought to take in most of us and make us wonder whether, after all, we may not have a share in the need of the gospel of forgiveness.

This morning in particular I stress the difficulty of forgiving sin. So often pardon has been presented as an easy gospel, as though one light-heartedly could cry, Come, everybody, and have your sins forgiven! No, it is hard to forgive sins—hard for us; hard for Christ. "Which is easier," said Jesus in the story of the palsied man, "to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk?" You see what the Master implies there. It is easier to tell a palsied man to walk—it is easier to meet any other human need—than to say, Thy sins are forgiven.

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At first that sounds strange from Jesus. We should have thought it easy for him to forgive. He said so many glorious words about forgiveness; he exhibited it so marvelously in his life; he made it forever memorable on the cross. One would think forgiveness spontaneously overflowed from him. But no; it was hard for him to forgive, as it always ought to be. And a lesson is there which we modern Christians need to learn.

Why, then, was it hard for Jesus to forgive? In the first place, because he took sin seriously. It is easy to condone sin, to make light of it; but when one takes it seriously, it is hard to forgive. Suppose that some one here were a specialist in tapestries, prized them, loved them; and suppose he saw some ruffians ruining one, ignorantly, brutally ruining a lovely thing that he knew to be worth a king's ransom—would you think it easy for him to forgive that? Another man who could not tell tapestry from cheesecloth would find it easy to condone the deed, make light of it, pass it over. But for the expert to say even about that, Forgive them, for they know not what they do, would not be easy, for he takes tapestries in earnest.

Consider, then, the moral realm. You can go to the theater any night and hear sexual sin made light of, condoned, laughed at. But Frederick W. Robertson, the English preacher, walked down the street in Brighton once with a face terrific as the Furies and grinding his teeth in rage. He had just heard of a man plotting the ruin of a fine girl whom he knew. He took that seriously and it was hard to forgive.

When, therefore, you hear any one talking about forgiveness light-heartedly as an easy matter, you may be sure of this: he is not forgiving sin; he is condoning it, and that is another affair altogether. There is plenty of that without our adding to it. To say that sin does not matter, to make light of it, to take it easily, to be gracious and tolerant about it—there is plenty of that. But that is not forgiveness. That is moral looseness. Sin does matter—tremendously! To condone sin is easy; to forgive it is hard.

Here lies a familiar difference between two kinds of

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mothers. Some mothers have no moral depth, no moral seriousness. A superficial affectionateness distinguishes their motherhood. They have an instinctive maternity for their offspring, such as bears have for their cubs or birds for their fledglings. When the son of such a mother becomes a prodigal and wallows in vice, she will receive him again—will receive him, condoning his sin, making light of it, saying that it does not matter, making up more excuses for it than he ever could himself concoct. But some of us had mothers who never would have forgiven us that way. They would have forgiven us, but, alike for them and for us, it would have been serious. They would have borne upon their hearts the outrage of our sin as though they had committed it themselves. They would have gone with vicarious steps to the gateway of any hell we turned our feet toward and stood grief-stricken at the door till we came out. They would have put themselves in our places, lived in our stead, felt upon their innocence the burden of our guilt. They would have forgiven us but it would have turned their hair gray. That is forgiveness. It always means self-substitution. He who gives forgiveness gives himself. And it is not easy.

Of course, all the seers have felt this. If Tennyson in his "Idylls of the King," portraying Arthur standing over Guinevere, fallen in penitent shame before him on the nunnery floor, had made him say some light-hearted thing as though her infidelity did not matter, we would feel the shallowness of that condoning. Moreover, Guinevere would have felt it too.

'The sombre close of that voluptuous day,
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King—'

she knew how serious had been her sin. How then could Tennyson have made Arthur's forgiveness less solemn than this:

'Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes;
I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,

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My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
The wrath which forced my thoughts on that fierce law,
The doom of treason and the flaming death,—
When first I heard thee hidden here,—is past.

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'And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,
Lo, I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives.'

That is forgiveness, and it is not easy. "Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk?"

In the second place, Jesus found it hard to forgive because he loved people. Ah! you say, the love of people makes it easy to forgive. No, you miss the point. When you love some one deeply and another's sin hurts that person, it is hard to forgive. And sin always does hurt other people. Nobody sins unto himself alone. When, therefore, one cares for people as Jesus did, it is hard to forgive sin.

Joseph's brothers dropped him into a pit, hauled him out again, sold him as a slave to a band of Midianite merchantmen bound for Egypt, dipped his long-sleeved cloak in the blood of a goat and carried it back to the father, Jacob, trying to persuade him that Joseph was dead. Now suppose they had grown conscience-stricken, remorseful, and, unable to stand it any longer, had gone to Jacob, confessing their sin and asking his pardon. Can you not feel the first question that would have risen in the father's heart in a storm of anxious and indignant grief—Where is Joseph? What, then, has become of Joseph? You ask me to forgive you, but your sin is not simply between me and you. Where is Joseph? Somewhere in a distant land, in miserable slavery he may be today. How can I forgive you until I know that all is well with Joseph?

When you love people, it is hard to forgive sin.

So in the Gospels you find it hard for Jesus. He was tremendously severe upon the scribes and Pharisees, you say, and truly he was. But what is the reason? Does it not reveal

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itself in verses like this, "Beware of the scribes . . . they that devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers"? Jesus was thinking of the widows and what the rapacity of the rulers did to them. His mother was a widow. We never hear of Joseph after Jesus' early boyhood. He knew what it was for a woman to be left with a family of children. More than once in Jesus' ministry a widow appeared, like the widow of Nain, and always his special gentleness overflowed. When in a parable he wanted to represent need, he pictured a widow pleading with an unjust judge. When, therefore, he was hard on scribes, one surmises the figure of his mother in the background of his mind. "They that devour widows' houses"—that made it hard to forgive.

You say he was tremendously severe on Dives. To be sure he was—picturesquely putting him in Hades with a great gulf fixed between him and paradise. But why? He thought of Lazarus, who had lain at Dives' gate, pitied by the very dogs but unsuccored by the rich man himself. Or you say the Master was hard upon the priest and Levite. So he was. But it was because he was thinking of the victim left on the road, neglected in their selfish haste.

When you care for people, it is hard to forgive sin.

All the seers have felt this. Recall George Eliot's story of *Adam Bede*—Hetty Sorrel, pretty, vain, and superficial; Adam Bede, the stalwart carpenter; Arthur Donnithorne, careless, impulsive, well-meaning, rich. You remember Adam Bede's honest love for Hetty and his wish to marry her, Hetty's ruin at the hands of Donnithorne, her hapless child, her frenzied wanderings. You remember the scene where Donnithorne, having tried desperately to make amends for what never could be mended, goes to Adam Bede and asks forgiveness. Well, Adam gives it, but it is not easy. "There's a sort o' damage, sir," says Adam, "that can't be made up for." Aye, you whose sin hurts other folk, remember that!

Let no one of us evade this principle because our sins may operate in other realms. We all have bad tempers. Out of the charcoal pits of what we are, the fumes arise that blast

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the flowers of happiness in other lives. We may have even secret infidelities that seep through our cleverest concealments and poison the springs from which other folks must drink. Always our evil involves others.

My friends, forgiveness is the miracle. The first thing that we are sure of in this universe is law. Some one has said that we can no more have sin without punishment than we can have positive electricity at one end of a needle without negative electricity at the other. And it would take more than a light-hearted chatterer condoning sin to convince me that there is anything else here. Too cheap! Too easy! But when I face Christ I face one whose plummet reached to the bottom of sin. Nobody ever took it so seriously; nobody ever hated it so for what it did to people, and yet he taught forgiveness. That is the miracle: that he taught forgiveness, that he practised it so marvelously that no poor human wreck was beyond the reach of its benedictions; and that throughout Christian history the glory of the gospel has been men and women reclaimed by pardon to a reestablished fellowship with God. It is marvelous good news. There is a merciful side to God and he forgives, but it is a miracle. Never take it lightly. "Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk?"

In the third place, Jesus found it hard to forgive because forgiveness is such a terrific experience for the man who is forgiven. Rather, I hear some one saying, it is glorious to be forgiven. My friend, if you say that light-heartedly, I am certain of one thing—you never have been forgiven. To do somebody wrong, to be alienated from him, to be ashamed of yourself, and then by free forgiveness to be restored to the old friendship and trusted again—surely that is the most humiliating experience that a proud man can go through. If there were any other way out of the remorse and guilt of sin, who wouldn't try to find it? For, you see, there is just one thing that forgiveness does—one thing only. Forgiveness does not take away the fact of sin; the Prodigal had still been in the far country. Forgiveness does not take away the memory of sin; the Prodigal never will forget it. Forgive-

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ness does not and cannot take away all the consequences of sin. As Adam Bede, the carpenter, said, "It's like a bit o' bad workmanship—you never see th' end o' th' mischief it'll do." But one thing forgiveness does; it reestablishes the old personal relationships that have been broken by sin, and makes them deeper and sweeter, it may even be, by awakened love and responsive gratitude. That great thing forgiveness does—and to have been thus alienated and then reconciled through forgiveness is about the most searching experience that the human heart ever goes through.

Is not that what Christians have always meant when they associated forgiveness with the cross of Christ? I do not know what theory of the atonement you may hold, and I might almost say I do not care whether you have any theory at all, but recognize this fact: behind all the explanations of atonement that have arisen and taken form and faded away in the history of Christian thought, this conviction has lain deep—the cross means that it was not easy even for God to forgive. It cost. And that is true to life. If you should grossly wrong your wife and then penitently ask her forgiveness and she should say, Oh, never mind; it is nothing—that would solve no problem. It would simply mean that she did not care what you did. A true-hearted woman would go deeper than that. Two things would be in her: first, a love high and deep enough to forgive; but, second, a character, an uprightness that would be wounded and crushed by your sin, an integrity that would find it hard to forgive.

When, therefore, the gospel has invited men to forgiveness, it never has invited them to a light-hearted place where sins are condoned. It has called them to the cross. And they have always heard the cross saying to them that it was hard even for God to forgive. It cost. It cost just what it always costs when men forgive: love putting itself in our place, bearing on its innocence the burden of our guilt. For whether a mother forgives a son or God forgives us, a cross is always at the center of it, and it is not easy.

Everything that we have said this morning has been leading up to this final and climactic matter: no man's sin ever

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is done with until it has come through this process of forgiveness. Either your sin has been forgiven or else it is yet in you as sin. I think that is about the solemnest fact in human life.

Do not take it from me as a Christian preacher, as though this were especially Christian, or even especially religious. It is universally human. Go back to Æschylus, hundreds of years before Christ, and read his story of Orestes, who sinned and was driven by the Furies over all the earth, finding no peace until he persuaded a jury of his fellow countrymen at Athens to vote forgiveness. Leap the centuries and come down to America. You need not go to church; go to one of the greatest novels yet written in America, *The Scarlet Letter*. See Arthur Dimmesdale, with his unconfessed, unforgiven sin. How shall he be rid of it? He is a man of intellect; he will absorb himself in thought. But that is no way out. He is a minister; he will preach sermons and save souls. But that is no way out. He is a servant and will go from door to door, humbly helping people. But that is no way out. There is only one way—penitence, confession, and forgiveness.

Go even to the psychiatrists, who in more ways than this are saying what Christianity has been saying for centuries. One of the leading psychiatrists in the world said to a personal friend of mine recently, "Most of the cases of mental derangement of a functional type are due to a sense of guilt."

And when, with all this testimony of the seers and scientists, you come to your own life, you know it is true; either your sin has been forgiven or else it is in you still as sin.

We know that most clearly when we are at our best. We have gross, brutal hours, when we forget our unforgiven sins, lock them in the hold, let the roar of the world fill our ears until conscience cannot be heard, but ever and again the finer hours return, when we know that unforgiven sin still is here because unforgiven. Any minister who takes preaching in earnest cannot look out over congregations like this,

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Sunday after Sunday, without thinking of all the unadvertised needs that must exist beneath our respectable exteriors. Who can sum them up in their infinite variety? But deepest of all, the unforgiven sins! There must be many here this morning. Go down into that secret place. Unlock that hidden door. Take out that unforgiven sin. For your soul's sake, get rid of it! But there is only one way. Whatever theology you hold, it is the way of the cross—penitence, confession, restitution, pardon.

The Practical Use of Faith

ONE of the most powerful influences in the world for good or for evil is faith. For faith primarily is a practical power to be used or misused. A strange misunderstanding obsesses many minds to the effect that faith first of all is a speculative problem to be discussed, whereas the substance of the matter is that the faculty of faith is one of the constituent elements of human nature, like the power to think or the power to love, to be used or misused.

When, for example, a religious exhorter urges us to have faith, he mistakes the state of the case. We have faith already; we would not be human beings without it; we never have existed an hour without exercising it; we have our being by virtue of our capacity to believe in something, and, using it, we make of life a heaven or a hell. Just as we have a love-life, we have a faith-faculty; no normal person needs to be urged to have it, but we all need to learn how to handle it.

Or when the so-called unbeliever questions our right to have faith, he too mistakes the case. Indeed, there is no such person as an unbeliever, if by that we mean a person who lacks faith. He may use his faith-faculty for this or that, believe in war or peace, monogamy or promiscuity, God or materialism, but all the time this faculty of faith is at work within him, involved in every vital activity of mind and life.

This matter demands attention because many of us now are facing situations, environmental in this chaotic generation, personal in problems that make carrying on hard, where the use of faith is a matter of life and death. Said a stalwart specimen of American manhood recently, "Without faith I could never get through what I am facing now." To that

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man faith was no longer first of all a problem to be discussed. He confronted a situation which demanded the marshaling of his interior resources. He had been compelled to go down into the armory of his soul to find weapons of the spirit with which to face antagonistic days, and there he had rediscovered faith, not as a problem but as a power. When a man does that, he is getting back to the New Testament in general and to Jesus in particular: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove." *There* is faith, not at all bristling with speculative difficulties but rather exhibiting power to move mountainous obstacles.

Let us at the start face one difficulty certain to be in many minds: the supposed conflict between faith and intelligence. Intelligence has so continually to fight popular beliefs that the predisposition of many minds is habitually to set over against each other intelligence and faith. When Galileo grasped the new astronomy, he had to fight old beliefs. When Harvey knew that the blood did circulate he faced opposing beliefs that it did not. So we have come to say, Give us intelligence but beware of this vice of the mind, this impediment to progress, faith. To this, of course, the answer is clear. Granted that faith is one of the most dangerous forces in the world! Men even have faith in war as a way of settling international difficulties, and from such major faiths, bringing ruin on whole civilizations, to individual beliefs—in rabbits' feet and astrology, fake medicines and demonology, incredible ideas about the world and obsolete creeds in religion—faith can debauch life, corrupt the mind, and impede progress.

That is precisely what we are driving at. Faith is a prodigious power, to be used or misused; the fate of mankind depends largely on what is done with it. We never can solve the problem by eliminating faith. Of all mad faiths the maddest is the faith that we can get rid of faith. A human being is essentially a creature who necessarily and forever believes in something. The only cure in this world for the wrong use of faith is the right use of it. Deep at the center of every

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personality, where we handle our own solitariness, we are working out success or failure, salvation or destruction, by our use of this perilous power.

Positively, then, let us consider some of the wholesome and saving uses of it. In particular, note four mortal enemies of the soul which never can be well handled without the right use of faith: aimlessness, feebleness, fear, and cynicism. If ever there was a time when these mortal enemies went up and down the earth seeking whom they might devour, it is today.

Aimlessness, then. Whatever else a strong faith does, it certainly gathers up the life, pulls it together, and gives it direction. Even a bad faith does that. One of the basic facts about human life, commonly forgotten by those who depreciate the need of faith, is that man is a creature who looks in three directions. He looks back and has a past. He looks in and has a present. He looks ahead and has a future. No man would be a man without that last, but what that last means to him depends on what it is out there, ahead, in which he verily has faith. If some one says that we cannot prove what lies ahead, just so! That is where demonstrable knowledge breaks down every day in every life, and so the direction of our going depends largely on what it is ahead there in which we verily believe. Lacking that, every one of us, as some one has said of our modern civilization, is "like an engine running without a headlight."

Here is the real answer to those who are predisposed to set faith and intelligence over against each other. Far from its being true that faith and intelligence are in conflict, we habitually mass our intellectual activity around the things in which we have faith. Did not the Wright brothers use their intellects upon their airplanes? I should say they did! And they did so because first of all they had believed in flying long before it was here. Did not we in this church use whatever intelligence we could conjure up in building an institution with doors wide open across all sectarian boundaries? Indeed we did, and often wistfully wished we had more intelligence at our disposal. And behind that was our faith

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in the possibilities of a non-sectarian church before it was here. All the intellect any man has is marshaled around the things he believes.

The conflicts, therefore, between intellect and faith are incidental, but the necessity of faith to intelligence is essential. Faith blazes the trail; intelligence builds the avenue. Faith pioneers new country; intelligence settles it. If in this congregation now there is a mind alert and eager, trying to see something clearly, think it through rightly, implement it successfully, we may be sure that such intellectual activity is centered in something that person believes.

Often Christian ministers urge faith in Christ. More than once, it may be, that appeal has seemed to you weak and insignificant. Who can blame you? Christian preachers commonly caricature faith in Christ and make it little more than passive acceptance of somebody else's opinions concerning him. But some of us from boyhood have seen the spirit of Christ reproduced in those who influenced us most, so that he has become the object of our faith and, despite our lamentable waywardness, has set the direction of our going. That experience is real and the consequence in life is inevitable. Life is not aimless; it gets concentration, integration, direction, aim. A strong faith can do that for a man and nothing else in this world can.

Another mortal enemy of our lives to be handled only by an intelligent use of faith is *feebleness*. In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* we are told that Doubting Castle was kept by Giant Despair and his wife Diffidence. Anybody might have thought of Giant Despair but it was a stroke of genius to put in his wife. For it is true that, when faith fails, diffidence, incertitude, insecurity, feebleness arrive with all their debilitated family.

Despite our boasted modern knowledge, many people still feel the deep need of inward power but do not know how to get it. First they try their wills. They strain their volition. But often that is like blowing with full cheeks upon our own sails to make the ship go; it does not release the winds

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of power. Then they try their minds. They say they will think the situation clearly through. But often, when they have thought the situation clearly through, it seems much worse than it did before. They have not released power. Then, in some fortunate and unexpected hour, an experience may come which renews their faith in life and, lo! something strong stands up in them that might move mountains.

I do not wish simply to discuss this. I wish I could help create it in all of us. We cannot produce power. No, but we can release it, and the greatest releaser of power in life is faith. Happy the man, then, who knows where to turn for those experiences which restore his faith in life. Sometimes beauty does it. Fed up with life, fatigued, done in, saying as one man said to me recently, Nothing left to believe in! we keep a tryst with nature or with music and come back, as the psalmist said, as one who has walked in green pastures and beside the still waters, restoring his soul. What has happened is a vision of another world above this world and interpenetrating it, which has renewed our faith in life and so brought back our power.

Or, it may be, in a dark hour finding life ugly, sordid, brutal, and feeling sick of this "dirty decade," where much of our literature has been "an explosion in a cesspool," to use a critic's phrase, we see, it may be, no more than a single deed, courageous, sacrificial, high-minded, beautiful, and lo! all that day, our faith in life restored, we walk with power.

Of course our friends do this for us. Walt Whitman said once, "I no doubt deserved my enemies, but I don't believe I deserved my friends." Just so! And what friends do for us is to lift us up from our collapsed moods, renew our faith in life, and so restore our power.

All experiences of released power are associated with renewed faith in life. And faith in life is not an accident. There are places where it comes. Alas for the man who does not know them and has no well-trodden pathway beaten to their doors! Especially unhappy is the man who has no deep, inner sanctuary of his own where his soul stands in the

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presence of the Over-Soul and is assured again that life as a whole "means intensely, and means good." That is personal religion at its center. The deepest difference between Christianity and irreligion is this: irreligion is a declaration of lost faith in life, that it came from nowhere save the dust, that it goes nowhither save back to it again, and that in the end it means nothing; and Christianity is a declaration of undiscourageable faith in life, its spiritual origin, its endless possibilities, its eternal meaning. When deep in the center of his personality a man has that perennial spring of faith's renewal, he possesses the fountains of power.

Another peril to life, *fear*, no man ever yet succeeded in handling well without a strong, intelligent faith. To be sure, if faith is used wrongly it produces fear. A man can believe in hell and be scared to death of it. He can believe in ghosts and by them be haunted. He can believe that he is sick until he is frightened into sickness. Faith wrongly used peoples the world with dread, but if, instead, a man learns the high art of intelligently using faith, he is done with obsessing fear.

We have lighted here upon a significant matter. Hitherto we have been talking about faith as though it were a way of laying hold on things already in existence; now we have to say that faith is one of the most creative forces in our lives and that continually it brings into existence something which was not there before.

So does fear. If you fear some things enough, you will produce them, and, by the same sign, if you have faith in some things enough, you will create them.

Only lately this city was in the grip of Tammany; that public enemy had us by the throat and with the conscienceless cynicism of a gangster was holding us up; and at the top of it all, so secure that it seemed incredible he could be unseated, was a wisecracking mayor, contemptuous alike of private decency and public honor. Look now at this city! We have at least a chance to clear up this civic mess and secure a charter that will prevent the return of Tammany's worst corruptions. When, now, one adds up the factors which made

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this victory possible—public indignation, hard work, intelligence, and what not—they alone never could have achieved success if they had not been multiplied by the faith—first of a few, then of more, then of the city—that it could be done. Faith creates what it has faith in.

Few things need more to be said than this on the matter of peace and war. Many in this discouraged time talk as though the age-long war system were a static fact and the embryonic peace system were another static fact, and the issue were the analytical appraisal of their comparative strength, with prophecies about the probable outcome. But such a static approach leaves out altogether the creative element. If enough people keep on believing in the war system, nothing can stop war. But if enough people would verily believe in the peace system, then the war system would prove as vulnerable as many another ancient curse. Edmund Burke, English statesman of the first magnitude, at one time regarded slavery as an incurable evil that never could be stopped. Fourscore years afterward, Lincoln wrote the Emancipation Proclamation. So, today, when the peace movement is hard-bested, I for that very reason give my faith to it. Now is the time to mass around the peace system the creative faith of those who, before God and their consciences, have lost faith in the war system.

You who long ago gave up belief in supernaturalism and so supposed in consequence that you had to live in one world only, think again. You never have heard me preach supernaturalism. I think that word represents an obsolete picture of a bifurcated universe. Nevertheless, we still live in two worlds. As human beings we are so made that we cannot help living in two worlds, the 'is' and the 'ought,' the actual and the possible, the factual and the ideal. Now the power which reaches out into the 'ought' and transforms it into the 'is,' which lays hold upon the possible and of it makes the actual, is creative faith. When such faith stands up, fear falls down.

The fourth enemy is *cynicism*. Nobody needs a description of that. It knocks at the doors; it taps on the windows of

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every personality here. As one of our modern writers sums life up:

. . . . It's all Nothing.
It's all a world where bugs and emperors
Go singularly back to the same dust.

Some of us, surely, came here feeling that, and if we are to surmount that feeling, it will be only by a strong faith. Without faith we inevitably exist within the boundaries of sight. But nobody ever yet succeeded in living within the boundaries of sight. Always, just over the border of sight, we have to live by insight. That is faith. As another has put it, faith is "veracity of insight."

Do not make this matter so mysterious that it ceases to be real and practical. It is as true in science as anywhere else. Lightning was a matter of sight for ages until one day insight came with such tremendous consequence as all our modern world bears witness to. As the Benéts say,

Ben Franklin made a pretty kite and flew it in the air
To call upon a thunderstorm that happened to be there,
—And all our humming dynamos and our electric light
Go back to what Ben Franklin found, the day he flew his kite.

Indeed, Sir Oliver Lodge, speaking of Isaac Newton, praised "his extraordinary instinct for guessing right." Guessing right? The discovery of the law of gravitation came from veracity of insight.

Recently a brilliant student of the new generation, so equipped in intellect and character that he will go far before he is through, and specializing in economics and government so that he is living and thinking in the most disturbed area in modern life, said to me quite out of the blue, "After all, everything I do or ever shall do is motivated by religious faith." That encouraged me, coming naturally and spontaneously from the lips of a brilliant and unconventional youth. I think I see what was in his mind. Always beyond the barriers of sight runs insight. This universe is not simply what on the surface it seems to be. Nothing that we can catch in test-tubes or measure with yardsticks or reduce to mathematical

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formulas goes to the bottom of reality. The invisible world of spiritual values is real. All that is best in us is the revelation of something eternal behind and ahead of us. This universe is infinitely more marvelous and meaningful than irreligion thinks. So Phœnician sailors once told Herodotus that they had voyaged out through the Straits of Gibraltar and, turning south, had come to the place where the shadows fell the wrong way. Herodotus was incredulous. He thought they were trying to fool an old man. He was incredulous too soon. Even this earth was more marvelous and meaningful than he had dreamed. So is this spiritual universe with its endless possibilities and its living God. Around that conviction the profoundest thinking of man's mind has gathered in support, but all such philosophy is only partial confirmation of something which preceded it: a leap of faith, a venture of intuition, a discovery of veracious insight.

Well, we have only one life to live. To live it aimlessly, feebly, fearfully, cynically is to be a total loss. "And this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith."

The Mystery of Life

THE older a man grows the more mysterious life becomes to him. We sometimes say to a youth that when he grows up he will know more, but that is a half-truth. In general, an increasing experience of life only deepens the sense of its mystery.

Professor Palmer of Harvard tells of receiving from one of his young students a manuscript with an accompanying letter in which the youth said that he intended to write several books and that this was only the first of them, in which, wrote the youth, "I have explained the universe." You see what it would mean to tell such a youth that when he grows up he will know more. It really means that when he grows up he will know less. He will discover, if he is wise, that life is set in a limitless sea of mystery.

Indeed, in every realm, the more we know the more the mystery grows. The popular idea that science clears up mysteries in the sense that the more science there is the less mystery is left, is a strange inversion of the fact. Modern science makes even the physical universe increasingly mysterious. Our ancient forefathers thought they lived upon a flat and stationary earth, and they were content with simple explanations, while we are on a planet flying eighteen and a half miles per second, with the nearest star twenty-five trillion miles away. There has been an increase of knowledge, but also an increase of mystery. And when one turns from the extensive aspect of science to the intensive and tries to keep up with modern physics and chemistry, what an access of information and what an access of mystery! In one of the last treatises on the new quantum theory of physics, the first sentence is this: "The series of concepts which we now approach are difficult to grasp and still more difficult to explain." I should say so! Professor Jeans, in his amazing book summing up the new knowledge of the world, says that in his

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opinion "the ultimate realities of the universe are at present quite beyond the reach of science, and may be—and probably are—for ever beyond the comprehension of the human mind."

If that is true about the physical universe, how much more true about our human life! It is a queer business, this human adventure of ours, and the older a man grows the queerer it seems. Everything about it is strange, from birth, where a single cell has carried over on its slender bridge what an amazing weight of inherited possibility from the race behind!—that is queer—until death, when this mysteriously compounded organism dissolves into its elements—which is queerer yet!—And in between birth and death, how the loveliness of life snuggles close to its tragedy! A little child, beautiful today, crippled tomorrow; great nations rising to world power and then falling like houses of sand built by children on the shore, when the tides of destiny flow in; great servants of the public good blotted out while some old roué drags on his worse-than-useless life; righteousness and rottenness; beautiful homes and insane asylums; glorious creative work and unemployment; the laughter of little children and three hundred burned to death in a prison—it is a queer business! And all around this human queerness on the earth that unfathomable ocean of universal mystery in which we are enisled and to which there is no end:

And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.

We succeed in getting on happily most of the time without bothering about this too much. We absorb ourselves in immediate tasks. We get our academic degrees; we succeed in business; we fall in love; we take care of our children; we improve our golf score; we take life as it comes and make the best of it. We are not always vividly conscious of the abysmal mystery of life, but it is always there. It is the abiding background of life, and ever and again something happens—great love, great tragedy, a child's birth, a friend's death, a blind alley where a man has to stop and think, a meditative

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day in the country even, when imagination spreads its wings and flies—something happens and we lift our eyes to see the mystery of life.

Now, mystery is dangerous; it can do things to us. Remember the old maps of the sea before Columbus and Magellan! Those unsailed seas were unknown and so were peopled with nameless horrors, monstrous sea creatures. Like children frightened in the dark, man has always been afraid of the unknown. Even in a mystery play today, let the stage be darkened and out of it some weird sound come, and the hair of even the intelligent will fairly stand on end. Mystery can do things to us, and mystery is doing things to many folk today. Cynicism, disillusionment, anxiety, fear—how often the thousand and one maladies of haunted lives come from emotional reaction to the mystery of life!

If some one protests that science has illumined many areas and driven off specters of the imagination that once frightened man, I agree. Many an ancient superstition that used to terrify men has retreated before the face of light, but, for all that science has done or can do, we still face mystery. Indeed, it was a scientist who said that all our modern knowledge is like a bonfire at night; we pile on the fuel and let the flames leap high, thereby increasing the area of illumination, to be sure, but increasing also the area of darkness that the light impinges on. More light makes more mystery visible.

What is out there in the unknown, and what should be our attitude toward it?

Obviously, the first lesson to be drawn from the mysteriousness of life is distrust of dogmatism. Whenever you see any one standing over against the mystery of life, whipping off finalities as though he could settle it, distrust that man. Indeed, let us make our distrust of dogmatism comprehensive so that it includes both dogmatic religionist and dogmatic irreligionist. Today in intelligent circles, the dogmatic religionist is fairly well outlawed. He is laughed at for his pains. Listen, for example, to a recent exhibition of an obsolete attitude and see how ridiculous it is. Let us take it from our own church family, lest we be suspected of laughing at

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some one else. Says a narrowly sectarian paper: "Baptists have the whole truth. Nobody else has. West Kentucky Baptists come nearer standing for the whole truth and all the truth than any other set of Baptists in this round world." Ah, you West Kentucky Baptists, how the world has waited for you! Even East Kentucky Baptists, marvelous as they are, have never discovered the truth of life as you have! No, in all intelligent circles, the day of that kind of thing in religion is going.

But, strangely enough, the day of that kind of thing in irreligion seems to be coming. Visiting a college campus some-time ago, I found the students in reaction against dogmatism in matters of religion. Ah! you say, just so; you cannot force religion dogmatically upon this younger generation. But, my friend, on that campus the shoe was on the other foot altogether. Those students were not reacting against a dogmatism that favored religion; they were reacting against a dogmatism that scorned religion. On that campus, long since, the department of religion had learned its lesson. It was intelligent; it was not dogmatic. There were, however, other chairs where little men were whipping out final solutions of the eternal mystery. No God—by no possibility anything like God! Mechanism—that was the magic secret which unsnarled all tangles and solved all mysteries. Human life upon this planet was an affair of chance! The heat happened to be just right at one stage of the planet's cooling and so life came, and out of life personality, and out of personality some amazing things, to be sure, but no God, nothing like God!

My friends, when we say today, Distrust dogmatism, we must mean in particular that kind of dogmatism, for in so-called intelligent circles it is much more common than religious dogmatism is. The spirit of the West Kentucky Baptists is not confined to West Kentucky. And, strangely enough, it particularly emerges in the field of irreligion.

There is one motto, on which great men of science and great men of faith would agree, that might well be hung upon the wall of every church and of every college class-

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room: "The more we know about the universe, the more mysterious it is."

This acknowledgment that our life is surrounded by mystery disturbs some religious people. Indeed, some one here this morning may be saying: This does not sound like the Bible; the Bible speaks with confidence, certainty, finality; give us the Bible! Very well, listen:

Canst thou by searching find out God?
Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?
It is high as heaven; what canst thou do?
Deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know?

That is the Bible. "Righteous art thou, O Jehovah, when I contend with thee; yet would I reason the cause with thee: wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they at ease that deal very treacherously?" That is the Bible. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That is the Bible. "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!" That is the Bible. "At present we only see the baffling reflections in a mirror." That is the Bible.

Indeed, we may well take that last for our text. It comes from Dr. Moffatt's translation of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. The old version said, "Now we see through a glass, darkly," but this is much nearer to the original: "At present we only see the baffling reflections in a mirror."

That is true; life is full of mystery. Yet we should be thankful for that very fact. Suppose there were no mystery. That would mean that you and I could comprehend the universe completely: but that, in turn, would mean that the universe was so thin and small that it could be comprehended by little minds like ours. The universe is far too marvelous for that. It is high; it is deep; our minds, developing for a few millennia upon this planet, cannot grasp it. It is not so pitifully small that we can understand it—let us be grateful for that! I would rather live in a world where my life is surrounded by mystery than live in a world so small that my mind could comprehend it.

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That is the first thing to say: Distrust dogmatism and be grateful that this universe is not so shallow that our little plummets can touch bottom.

The second thing to say is this: Wherever a mystery has been cleared up, the truth has turned out to be more marvelous than anybody had dared to dream—mark it!—*more* marvelous, not less. The flat and stationary earth on which our ancestors thought they lived presented a mystery: what did it rest on? Some people said that it rested on an elephant and that the elephant stood on a turtle. One old Hebrew poet, who wrote the Book of Job, said: "He . . . hangeth the earth upon nothing." That was a leap of insight, and yet a flat and stationary earth that rests on nothing is a mystery. Now, that mystery has been cleared up and the truth that cleared it up turned out to be so marvelous, beyond anything that man had dared to dream, that it took many a year before mankind could believe it—the earth not flat, round; not stationary, traveling six hundred million miles a year around the sun, and the whole solar system but an item in an immeasurable cosmos held together by gravitation. You see, wherever a mystery has been cleared up, the truth has proved to be more marvelous than folk had dared to think.

Fossils used to be a mystery. Those strange stone bugs and things in the strata of the earth—how did they get there? Some even said that God had deliberately put them there to perplex man's mind and test his faith. Well, the mystery of fossils has been cleared up and the truth that cleared it up, the long leisureliness of creation, slowly laying the foundations of the earth, and the eonic story of life's evolution, is so marvelous that some folk yet cannot believe it. This has always been so: whenever a mystery has been cleared up, the truth lay, not on this side of our imaginations but far beyond. This world always turns out to be more wonderful than any one had thought.

That is one basic reason why some of us approach the mystery of life with positiveness and triumph. To take a negative and timid attitude toward the unknown in a world where the unknown, when it is cleared up, has always turned

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out to be more marvelous than we had dreamed—that is irrational.

In my youth I studied the old physics. Now we have Einstein and Eddington. This world *is* more marvelous than we had thought. Some of our children come home talking familiarly about the fourth dimension. Undoubtedly it is here. We live in three dimensions only, but there is a fourth. Our ears tune in on a narrow scale of sound, but endless sound-waves must be above and below. Our eyes tune in on a small spectrum of color, but wide ranges of vision must be unguessed by us. Always the mystery has turned out to be filled, not by ghosts and hobgoblins, but by marvels.

Can we really think of the spiritual life of man as the solitary exception to this rule? My friends, this universe is more spiritually significant than any of us have ever dared to think—I stake my faith on that!

Indeed, it is not even a matter of what we ordinarily call faith. For consider: whenever a mystery has been cleared up, there always has been an adequate explanation. Facts are never left high and dry in the air without an adequate explanation when any mystery is cleared up. When perturbations appeared in the orbit of the planet Uranus, astronomers said there must be an explanation for these perturbations. No explanation was in sight. They said there must be an explanation and they guessed another planet whose location they figured out. But no such planet was yet known. Then they searched both the sky and their star maps more carefully and discovered it—the planet Neptune. Whenever a mystery is cleared up there is always an adequate explanation. That is the kind of universe we live in.

Do you really mean that man's spiritual life is the only exception, that personality with all its possibilities and its achievements is but a fortuitous result of the heat's happening to be right at one stage of the planet's cooling? Nonsense, my friends! That is not dealing seriously with the law of adequate causation. There are facts here, prodigious facts which cannot be brushed aside like that: personality, the most amazing fact in the universe, self-conscious being with powers of

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memory and reflection, intelligence, purposefulness, and love; spiritual life, glorious spiritual life in Christlike souls, where beauty and truth have flowered out into bloom and fragrance; progress from some stone age to hopes of international goodwill and brotherhood; creative power to produce beauty, discover truth, achieve goodness—prodigious facts. And there is an explanation. Unless this universe is crazy, and it never yet has turned out to be crazy, there is an explanation. Moreover, there is an *adequate* explanation.

For one, therefore, I go out into this mysterious life with a song. There is an explanation. The mystery is one of light and not of darkness. I know the explanation only in bits. "At present we only see the baffling reflections in a mirror," but there is an explanation. For this strange human life with its hopes and tragedies, for this vast cosmos, the queer home of our adventure, there is an explanation.

If you say our ideas of God, as the explanation, are inadequate, we know that. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" The trouble is that our ideas are so far short of the reality. The truth is much more marvelous than we have dared to think. That is the second thing to say: that the mystery of life is not full of fear but of marvel, and that this universe is more spiritually significant than we have yet imagined.

The third thing to say is that in the meantime there is light enough to live by. Though we are often baffled and perplexed so that like Wordsworth we go off to some Tintern Abbey, feeling the "burthen of the mystery" and

. . . the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,

when we come to our best hours and pull ourselves together, there is light enough to live by—decently with ourselves, kindly with our neighbors, courageously in our troubles—light enough to be at least a little radiant within and, without, to help build a fairer social order where personality may flourish.

Indeed, remember that our text comes from the thirteenth

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chapter of First Corinthians. Has it ever occurred to anybody that that chapter sounds baffled and perplexed? Upon the contrary, it is a triumphant song about those abiding values that a man can depend on and live by gloriously: faith, and hope, and love. Yet at the heart of that chapter you will find everything we have been talking about this morning. Paul says that our vaunted knowledge will disappear, that now we know in part and prophesy in part, and that when full knowledge comes our knowledge will vanish away. Paul says that sometime we shall see face to face but now we see only the baffling reflections in a mirror. Like all large minds, Paul felt the mystery of life, but he found something else here too: light, glorious light to live by—"Now abideth faith, hope, love."

Our morning's thought would be alike incomplete and unchristian without this truth. What is it that our religion does for us, anyway? Does it clear up the mysteries? Of course not. More harm has been done than wise work will undo for many a year by preachers who have pretended to clear up the mystery of life. Think of a preacher proposing to clear up the intellectual and moral perplexities of a cosmos like this! Think of a preacher tackling the problem of a world where little children are born defective, where whole races, like the Aztecs, rise and fall and pass away, and leave hardly a memory behind, where human life is battered by unequal and cruel circumstance, where today if you are born in India you have an average chance of living twenty-two years and if you are born in the United States you have an average chance of living fifty-nine years—tackling a cosmos where the loveliest life was crucified, to clear up the mystery! No, our religion does not clear up the mystery or give us a formula to answer all questions. Upon the contrary, at the heart of our religion is the deepest mystery of all, the cross, where love was nailed to a tree by hate. But what our religion does do is to give us a kind of life, and power withal to sustain it, that can be lived joyously, triumphantly, in the midst of the mystery. It gives us light enough to walk by: faith, and hope, and love.

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That is why we Christians so rejoice that the center of our religious life is not a proposition but a person. Propositions to clear up the mystery are of all things most temporary. But a person who faced all the bafflements that you and I face, hated, deserted, crucified even, and yet who, through it all and above it all, lived victoriously and when the final mystery was closing in upon him said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full"—a triumphant character like that throws such illumination on our path that we have done well to call him "the light of the world."

You and I are going out from this church to our work again. Somehow or other, mystery or no mystery, we must manage to carry on with this business of living. How many of us here have been depleting our energies for that high task by negative reactions to the mystery of life? It is easy for a man to think himself into the depths by saying habitually to himself, Life is so puzzling, so bewildering, has so many baffling problems, unsolved riddles, unanswered questions; why? . . . why? . . . why? My friends, there are other souls, triumphant souls, who find life just as mysterious as you do but who have found something else. Remember Pompilia in Browning's "Ring and the Book." She faced a mystery dark and cruel enough. But you will recall her saying about a beautiful life that had singularly blessed hers,

. . . Through such souls alone
God stooping shows sufficient of his light
For us i' the dark to rise by. And I rise.

That is the essence of the gospel. We say it about Christ:

God stooping shows sufficient of his light
For us i' the dark to rise by.

*The Revolt Against
Irreligion*

EXCITEMENT is always to be found in joining a revolt. To stand by the status quo, to defend the established order, seems dull and tame, but to rebel against it is exciting. Youth habitually is in revolt against something, and any one who with sympathetic retrospect examines his own youth sees that in large measure that is due to the sheer zest and relish of revolt itself. Rebellion is a stimulant. It quickens the pace and heightens the gusto of living.

So far as religion is concerned, the advantage of revolt in recent years has been on the side of the disbelievers. They have been the rebels. Against an established religious status quo they raised insurrection. Like the opposition party in a government, without assuming responsibility themselves they pressed their attack against the religious party in power, and the zest that belongs to rebellion was theirs. Come, they said, let us revolt against the tyrannies, obscurantisms, and repressions of religion!

Today, however, the situation is rapidly changing. In these latter years, along a wide front, disbelief has won a victory. Let us not deceive ourselves about that! Disbelief has lifted the attractive standard of revolt and has gained millions of adherents. It is taken for granted among intellectuals over wide areas. One entire nation has gone over to it. We no longer have to guess what thoroughgoing disbelief will mean. We can see it all around us in personal character and social attitude, in its philosophy of life and its ethical result. As a consequence, many religious people are sorely discouraged. I am not.

For one thing, this revolt of the disbelievers was well deserved. It has brought to bear upon our creeds and churches justified criticism. It has forced intelligent believers to re-establish their lines on more defensible grounds. But, more

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than that, it is handing over to us the advantage of revolt. Now *we* are the rebels—against irreligion. Once our discipleship to Jesus might have meant a fairly contented acceptance and defense of ways of thinking and living familiar in our family and community. Not now. Up into places of power, out into the thinking of our time, filling our literature with cynicism, our personal living with futility, our public life with paganism, moves triumphant disbelief. Some of us hate it. All that seems to us most precious in life is threatened by it. All that makes life most worth living may be crushed under it. Our Christianity may no longer be the defense of the status quo. We are in rebellion against a pagan world ruled by irreligion.

Let us capitalize that situation! We might make being a Christian exciting again if we would do that.

Indeed, this is the kind of situation in which Christianity began. At first the Christian movement was a revolt. The New Testament is a book of insurrection against a heathen world. "We wrestle," said Paul, "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Christianity at the beginning was no supporter of a status quo. Such an idea never would have released in those first disciples the power which turned the world upside down. They were rebels against a pagan world. Today their situation faces us.

In the first place, we had better join the revolt against irreligion because of what we see irreligion doing to personal morale. The primary effect of disbelief is to disturb not morals but morale. For while many motives may conspire to make a man an atheist in opinion and yet a charming and reliable character in human relationships, there is no way, so far as I can see, by which a man can become genuinely irreligious without lowering his enthusiasm about living, his estimate of the essential worth, meaning, and dignity of life, and so lowering his morale.

On a college campus where a friend of mine was going to speak, a questionnaire was circulated in order to discover the problems which the students most wished to have dis-

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cussed. The towering question on that campus turned out to be: Has life any meaning at all and, if so, what is it? A group of privileged American youth, far above the average in intellectual opportunity, had been played upon by prevalent irreligion until they were wondering if life has any meaning whatever.

Those young people had everything that science could tell them about life. But science alone does not give life *meaning*. Science does two things. First, it gives us a new quantitative description of the world in terms of mathematical measurement and a new sequential description of the world in terms of cause and effect. It thus presents us with a marvelous new picture of the world. But this quantitative and sequential picture of the world does not tell us what it means. What it means to us is determined by our philosophy of life, by our ideas of what the supreme values are for which a man might well live and die, by our deep interior religion. In the second place, science gives us not only a new description of the world but a new power over it. Science harnesses the latent resources of the universe and puts the reins into our hands, saying, Drive them. But science does not tell us where to drive them, or why we should bother to drive them at all, or whether our existence on this planet has such meaning that it is a good thing to have science confer on us such power. *That* comes from deeper levels of the soul than science ever gets its hands on, from our interior attitudes to life's whole meaning—from our religion.

Here, then, are groups of privileged youth, possessing all the things we can put into their hands and the truth science can put into their minds, stripped by irreligion of this deeper matter without which nothing matters much, and wondering whether life has any meaning. That is an intolerable situation. Certainly it is a prevalent situation. And it will become more and more prevalent so long as irreligion triumphs.

Intelligent Christianity is fighting no sham battle. This is a real conflict, with tremendous issues at stake. Heaven have mercy on a nation whose most privileged youth, with everything that culture and education can give them, stand upon

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the threshold of their lives wondering whether life has any meaning!

Consider how we got into this situation. While religion was in the ascendancy, irreligion started out to destroy it, and the irreligionists enjoyed destroying it. They undertook to overthrow the idea of God, the idea of immortality, the idea of any purpose in the universe, the idea of any more permanent meaning in man than there is in the animals, until they left us merely transient physical organisms with some interesting psychological by-products, fortuitously evolved upon this planet.

As long as religion was here to revolt against, the irreligionists enjoyed their rebellion. They had an aim in life—to destroy religion. They may have proclaimed that there is no purpose in the universe, but they had a purpose—to deny purpose in the universe. So, with the zest and enthusiasm of revolt, they went out to overthrow religion. Now, however, they face the aftermath. In wide areas their rebellion has succeeded. The idols they went out to smash are broken down. They find themselves agreed with on every side: no God, no immortality, no purpose in the universe. So far as the company they move in is concerned, they live in an irreligious world. What then?

No one can better describe 'what then' than Mr. Walter Lippmann. He is an authority upon this situation; his opinions in large measure correspond with it. He says that the most distinguishing element of the present generation is not their rebellion against religion but their disillusionment with their rebellion. Who can forget the searching phrases with which Mr. Lippmann describes the situation?—"perplexed by the consequences of their own irreligion"; "having lost their faith, they have lost the certainty that their lives are significant, and that it matters what they do with their lives"; "brave and brilliant atheists who have defied the Methodist God, and have become very nervous"; "young men and women who are world-weary at twenty-two"; "we have succeeded only in substituting trivial illusions for majestic faiths." So!

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I prophesy a revolt against all that. I think the revolt already has begun. I wish the church were better fitted to take advantage of it. Christianity can be reborn if she will only see how indispensable this revolt is. Life cannot go on without spiritual meaning. We can go on without automobiles and airplanes. We can live on a dollar a day if we have to, but if life has no aim, no direction, no purpose, if there is no essential and abiding meaning in it, then it is dust and ashes to our taste.

One of our literary critics wrote some time ago in a letter to a friend: "People like myself have got to fake a direction finally, we can't go on forever being bright or smart or naughty young things." That is what irreligion has done to millions; it has made them fake a direction to life because they could not find one.

Again, we had better join this revolt against irreligion because of the substitutes which always come when religion goes. It is not impossible in wide areas of human life to destroy everything ordinarily called religious, but it is impossible to destroy the profound human needs which religion has helped to meet. As Wells says, the religion of the atheist has a God-shaped blank at its heart. Now, when a whole generation has a God-shaped blank at its heart, something comes to fill it. For example, when the disbelievers began to discover that they might get rid of God and that therefore they must put something in his place, they began glorifying man. What else could they do? O marvelous man, they said in effect, the highest object of devotion we have left, wanting nothing higher than yourself, quite able to solve all your problems and to meet all your needs on this planet! They quoted with approval Walt Whitman's line, "Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself." Wide ranges of disbelief today present this interesting spectacle: man denying God and so inevitably becoming his own god.

How everlastingly true are the words of Amiel! "They think they can do without religion; they do not know that religion is indestructible, and that the question is simply,

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Which will you have?" Every time man loses one kind of religion he gets a substitute. As for belief in God, it is plain now, not simply in the logic of the case but in observable facts around us, that whenever man stops worshipping something higher than himself he begins worshipping himself. Look, then, on this crazy, chaotic, tempest-tossed world to-day! What do you think of this spectacle—man worshipping himself?

If we wish to see what it means to deny God and to have man his own god, we need no longer guess. It is out in the open now in the confessions of many men and women who are in this situation—men like Theodore Dreiser, the novelist, saying, "Whatever man does is something that can only prolong the struggles and worries and for the most part futile dreams of those with whom he finds himself companioned here in this atomic or cellular welter. . . . In short, I catch no meaning from all I have seen, and pass quite as I came, confused and dismayed"; men like Clarence Darrow, saying that the outstanding fact about human life is "the futility of it all." "It is possible," he thinks, "that no life is of much value, and that every death is little loss" to the world.

One could go on for hours quoting men who have gone through the process of losing God and finding man his own god. These men have brains and character; they are our intellectuals; they have ability; their lives are full of interests which ought to make life worth living. If irreligion does this to such men, what will it do to the great mass of the people if at last irreligion triumphs and they find themselves in that blind alley, that cul-de-sac, where man has no god but himself?

Indeed, what do these pictures in the newspapers mean, showing countless thousands of youths saluting the absolute, nationalistic state? For one thing, such pictures mean plainly that human beings do not most of all want comfort. Man wants not so much comfort as excitement. Put before any healthy youth two paths, one of which leads to comfort and the other of which leads to excitement, and almost inevitably he will take the second path. How, then, does man

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find excitement in life? By having something to live for, to give oneself to, to bestow loyalty upon, to stand before, saying, as it were, My Lord and my God! Nobody begins to understand how thrilling life can be until he has known that experience. On this point Paul is right, whether in Athens or anywhere else: "In all things I perceive that ye are very religious."

Millions today, some in this country and many elsewhere, are taking that attitude toward the absolute, nationalistic state. It is a substitute religion. It has its dogmas, its rituals, its symbols, and its sacraments. At the heart of it is this tremendous matter: the utter devotion of millions of souls to the nationalistic god. Where do you think that substitute god will bring us out? He will tear our world into bloody pieces and make our children's earth a hell.

The old ministers used to do something which they called preaching up the revival. I wish I could do it now. Never in history was there a time when it was more needed. When one regards our present world, one does not, indeed, call for emotional mob-psychology, but one does call for a revival of sober, religious thoughtfulness. The only thing that can overthrow these substitute gods is the real God. I know the church's failures in representing him in thought and life; judgment does indeed begin at the house of God. But now, rebelling against that old organized religion, irreligion triumphs. It thinks it is getting rid of God. See what it is really doing—letting in a whole troop of substitute gods. The pagan deities are coming back: Mars, Venus, Bacchus, Mercury.

Finally, we had better join this revolt against irreligion because of what it is doing on every side to our interior, spiritual resources. It always has seemed logical to expect that with the loss of Christian faith there would come a corresponding loss of inward reserves of power and adequacy for living. For whatever may be our opinion about details of creed and church, this basic, psychological fact stares us in the face: men cannot use more spiritual power than they believe themselves to possess.

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Now, Christian faith always has persuaded those who deeply understood it that there are immense reserves of spiritual power available for daily living. Christian faith teaches us that we are not pools, easily exhausted, but rivers, down whose channels can flow a power greater than our own, so that our strength is not so much *in* us as *through* us, and if we keep the upper fountains open there are no small limits around the power which may be released through us. The New Testament fairly sings with this consciousness of spiritual reserves, so that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us, and its pages are peopled with folk who through faith found those two things without which no life can be well lived, stimulus and stability. From the most ancient literature still extant to the last man whose interior problems you know, is there any deeper need revealed than for stimulus and stability?

It has always been logical, I say, to think that with the loss of Christian faith there would come a corresponding loss in this awareness of deep interior resources. Today, however, one need no longer rely upon what may seem logical; one can see this loss actually taking place, all the way from earlier disbelievers like Thomas Hardy, describing his substitute for God,

. . . the dreaming, dark, dumb Thing
That turns the handle of this idle Show!

to brilliant atheists like Krutch, suspecting that man is no more significant than an insect that crawls from one annihilation to another. Walk around that idea of life for a while and see how much stimulus and stability are there.

Consider now that all this time during which irreligion thus has been creeping in upon us and depressing our adequacy for life, life itself has not been getting easier. Not by a long sea-mile! One Sunday morning in this city, a journalist, at the end of his moral and practical resources, went into a drugstore, bought a deadly poison, and started out to find a convenient place in a park where he could drink it and die. Passing a church, however, with a crowd before it, his

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journalistic instinct got the better of him and he decided that before committing suicide he would go inside and see what the crowd was all about. After the service he left the church, threw the poison down a street drain, took a day or two to pull himself together, and then came to see me and start on a new life. For that man's sake I am glad that he did not, on that Sunday, run into a protagonist of irreligion. Suppose that instead of presenting to him the Christian faith the preacher had said that there was no God, no purpose in the universe, that he came from nothing, signified little, and was going nowhither. What a devastating philosophy to present to a man who is up against it!

In this generation do you know anybody who, one way or another, sooner or later, is not up against it? There are old stories of beggars and cripples banished from the streets on the coronation days of kings and queens lest their presence spoil the festival. O protagonist of irreligion, you had better thus banish troubled spirits on the day when you enthrone disbelief in this world. For you have no message for them, no power to put into them, no hope to hold ahead of them. I think I hate your irreligion most of all for this, that in a day when men desperately need heart you take it out of them.

So the revolt is on against you. You have had your innings long enough. Indeed, friends of mine who have not visited the sanctuary much for a decade begin to see it. "There is reason," says a contemporary writer, "to believe that the period of cynicism and moral frustration caused by the war is drawing to its close. Youth is beginning to believe in something again." So may God grant!

What About God?

FOR a long time I have intended preaching a sermon about God without using the word. For words which ought to clarify thought sometimes befuddle it instead, especially when through a long history they have accumulated diverse meanings. Such a word is 'God.' The deity who walks in a garden in the cool of the day, a war god who lives on a mountain, as Jehovah lived on Sinai or Zeus on Olympus, a tribal god who loves his people and hates their enemies, a being who sits above the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers before him, a father from whose love no soul is exiled—what a strange medley of meanings for one word to carry! Moreover, the wonder grows that language can be so elastic that while one philosopher calls God the Principle of Concretion in the universe and another calls him the personification of our loyalties, like Uncle Sam or Alma Mater, still others respond to Wordsworth's thought of him as the presence that disturbs us with the joy of elevated thoughts. The result is that, as when one sings "Home, sweet home" the words conjure up in each of us a different image, so when the word 'God' is used, even in such a company as this, one cannot be sure what diverse pictures are evoked.

Let us, then, try a sermon about God without using the word. For if in these difficult days your experience is anything like mine, you do need the deep meanings for which that word has stood. It was not a Christian but an atheist who called the concept 'God' "the mightiest thought-product that has influenced humanity." If ever we needed mighty thought-products, deep ideas to sink our roots into, it is today.

If any one supposes that such a subject is aloof from the common needs of ordinary folk, I beg to differ. Only this last week one man, bearing a heavy burden of practical

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anxiety, said to me, "I carry on by remembering one phrase out of the Bible, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee,' " and an extraordinary woman standing on the verge of death, soon to pass into the unseen, said to me, "One word is continually in my mind: 'Be still, and know that I am God.' " It is in difficult days that most we need the rootage of great thoughts. And materialism in any of its forms is not a great thought. It is bad enough to think it in easy days; it is deadly to think it when one is in trouble too.

Sidney Lanier once went to the Georgia marshes and afterwards wrote one of his rememberable poems:

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the
skies:

By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn.

You see, he was nourishing his soul on great thoughts. He needed them. He was fighting tuberculosis. His whole career was in jeopardy. He was in trouble. He critically needed great thoughts.

So today let us try a sermon about God, even if we do not use the word.

For one thing, we need great thoughts about the universe. In a new book on science this sentence stands: "At the present day the scientific universe is more mysterious than it has ever been before in the history of thought." Surely, that is true. No more significant change has passed over thinking in our era than that which sets the contrast between the dogmatic, mechanistic materialism of the nineteenth century and the total attitude of the best science today. To some thinkers at that time it seemed certain that they had the explanation of the universe in their hands: atoms—little, round, hard atoms—the constituent elements of all that is, so that

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from star-dust to the brain of the scientist and the character of the saint, everything was to be explained in terms of them.

As we all know, that idea is obsolete. Recently I picked up a book written less than ten years ago, in which a Christian scholar effectively assailed those old concepts of atomic materialism. How important that book seemed to us when first it appeared! How strangely out of date it seems today! What is the use of Christians assailing such ideas when it is the scientists who are pushing that attack? "The universe," says Jeans, the physicist, "can be best pictured, although still very imperfectly and inadequately, as consisting of pure thought, the thought of what, for want of a wider word, we must describe as a mathematical thinker." What a change!

Religion is not alone in being bothered by words which keep altering their meaning. Science is just as badly off. 'Cosmos' is the Greek word for 'world' used in the New Testament. The early Christian writers thought the earth was flat and they called their world 'cosmos.' Since then the earth has become round and we have had a Ptolemaic cosmos; the earth has become a planet of a central sun and we have had a Copernican cosmos; the insight of the mathematicians has woven the fabric of the universe out of law and we have had a Newtonian cosmos; and now, with the new astronomy, the quantum physics, and the revolutionary geometries of men like Einstein, 'cosmos' means something it never meant in the history of thought before. So, when any man in the name of science tries to tell me that we Christians are undone because we use a word for Deity that has changed its significance so often it has grown ambiguous, I know the answer: You're another!

All alike in this amazing universe, we face the situation which Humpty Dumpty and Alice described in *Through the Looking-Glass*. Said Humpty Dumpty, "When I use the word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less." Said Alice, "The question is whether you *can* make words mean so many different things." Said Humpty Dumpty, "The question is which is to be master—that's all. . . . When I make a word do a lot of work like that, I al-

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ways pay it extra." Well, on that ground the word 'cosmos' needs to be paid extra.

Moreover, Christians could afford to pay the price, for this new universe has opened wide the gates to great thoughts. To be sure, there are two aspects of it which have well-nigh scared religious faith out of many people—its age and its size. How terrific they can seem! If a man lets himself be hypnotized by those two aspects of the universe, its age and its size, he well may say with Pascal, "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me."

But, surely, the age and size of the universe are not to careful thought its most impressive attributes. Consider, rather, its *unity*, like the coat of Christ without seam, woven from the top throughout; its *order*—anywhere throughout this vast expanse ask this universe the same question in the same way and it will always give you the same answer; its *simplicity*—the whole physical cosmos made out of less than a hundred chemical elements, and they falling into a regular and continuous numerical scale; its *intelligibility* so that, wherever mind goes, the universe answers mind, as though mind had made it and so mind could understand it.

As a teacher of religion I rejoice that at last in New York City we are promised a planetarium. A hard-headed, hard-driving friend of mine recently told me that the most moving religious experience he had had for years was not in church, where he rarely goes, but in a planetarium, where before his eyes was unrolled the spectacle of the universe in its unity, order, simplicity, and intelligibility. "Man," he said to me, "the word 'chance' doesn't fit it. There is mind in that." I suspect there is, for otherwise, as another has said, "it takes more mind to construe the universe than to construct it."

We often have the experience of feeling sure of a thing even when we are not sure of the argument. Concerning some of the most important truths in life we often see enough to feel certain of the reality without being quite certain of the argument. Well, I am sure that this amazing cosmos, more mysterious than it has ever been before in the history of thought, cannot be crowded into any formula of chance or

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materialism. Something deeper and higher than that is here. And in difficult times, when I am tired, hectic, tense, I go out under the stars or even think of them, and they say, as nature said to Emerson, "So hot, my little sir?" or, deeper yet, the psalmist rises in me: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"

Again, in days like these we need great thoughts, not simply about the universe but about the human soul. Have we not often, when the mood was on us, stood back from this world and watched in imagination its evolving life until at last personality emerged and, lo! as though a kingdom had been waiting for its subjects, the human soul at its best entered the invisible realm of spiritual values: the love of beauty, the love of goodness, the love of truth? When anybody tells me that the explanation of the soul and the kingdom of values, in which alone the soul truly lives, lies in the fortuitous arrangement of matter, that seems more incredible than the strangest religious creed.

Let us be as hard-headed about this as possible by thinking first, not of beauty and goodness, but of that spiritual value on which science itself rests: the love of truth. Many forget that the origin of science is profoundly spiritual: the disinterested love of truth. The most amazing aspect of science is not this physical universe which it has unveiled. The most amazing aspect of science is the scientist. The knowing mind is more marvelous than the known universe. The measurements of the cosmos are not so astonishing as the mind that makes them. When, therefore, a materialistic scientist tries to convince me that my Christian faith must be given up, the answer is ready. You yourself, I say, are the refutation of your own doctrine. You yourself are a stronger argument for the spiritual explanation of life than all your arguments against it, for while you might get the physical cosmos out of physics, your mind, which has, as it were, encompassed the cosmos, and in which all you know about the cosmos is contained, *that* you cannot get out of physics. What Emerson said about another matter is true of this. What you *are* thunders so in favor of a spiritual explanation of life that I

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cannot hear what you *say* to the contrary. If Einstein himself should argue in favor of materialism, which he does not, I would not believe Einstein—because of Einstein. You remind me, I would say, of Karl Marx, who once wrote a great book setting forth the doctrine of economic determinism. Practically everything, according to Marx, is to an overwhelming extent determined by economic forces and considerations. Yet, all the time, Karl Marx himself was not determined by economic considerations. He voluntarily accepted, for himself and his family, exile and poverty on behalf of his cause. He refused to take one penny from the funds raised for the First International. He never made a cent out of his movement and all his days he lived precariously and sacrificially. Economic determinism? I cannot believe Karl Marx's argument because it does not cover the case of Karl Marx. He himself is a stronger argument against the adequacy of his position than all his arguments for it.

So, when I turn from science in the abstract to a scientist, beginning with his disinterested love of truth and ending with the cosmic outreach of his mind, I say, There is a reality which all his neat, physical formulas will never fit. As Dean Inge puts it: "The naturalist may account for nature, but not for himself as an observer of nature."

If this is true with reference to the mind's love of truth, it is true, is it not? with reference to our love of beauty and goodness. I can imagine some young intellectual trying to tell us that the love of goodness and beauty is poetry. But why suppose that to call anything 'poetry' is to condemn it as untrue or unimportant? Whitehead is not a tender-minded and poetic person; he is a philosopher. If you can understand all he writes you are a better man than I am. But one passage of his I can understand, one of the truest and noblest I think he ever wrote, in which he describes how the poets saved the intellectual life of the nineteenth century. From a philosopher that is astonishing. The old materialism, he says, was dominant. It had hypnotized the mind of the generation, and what saved the situation was not the philosophers and theologians but the rebellion of the poets. From Wordsworth on,

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they withstood the materialism of their generation, saying: You are leaving something out; you shall not be permitted to leave it out; the human soul is deeper than you think; beauty and goodness are real; you cannot, forgetting them, deal only with things to be touched and measured and then find the truth about the universe; only up the highroad of the human soul lies the path to reality. So they cried. And now it is a philosopher who says that they were right. He approves "the poetic insight of Wordsworth" who "felt that something had been left out, and that what had been left out comprised everything that was most important."

In these days again we need to recover great thoughts about the soul. And when we do, how can we prevent ourselves from facing the fact that through all the ages the human soul at its best and deepest has thought that it was living in union with another Soul, a presence from whose fellowship came its peace and power?

A rising young singer in New York came to see me with this problem. He had lost, so he said, all vital religious faith. At any rate, he had no secure ideas left about it. But in his concerts he never stood up to sing without praying inwardly first. His friends were laughing at him. They said, "You sing well because you have a beautiful voice and not because there is any divine power that helps you." "And," said he, "according to my theories they ought to be right, yet I never sing until I pray, and something happens in me when I do." Of course something happens in a man when he knows how to pray. We are channels. No man has learned the first lesson about life until he knows that. Physically we are channels. Our bodily power we take in; it flows through us from the universe. Spiritually we are. Our inward power we assimilate, appropriate; it is not in us, but through us. Why do we believe in the reality of a physical world? Because when we fulfil physical conditions we get powerful physical results. We must be dealing with reality there. Why do we believe in the reality of a spiritual world? Because when we fulfil inward spiritual conditions we get powerful spiritual results.

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We must be dealing with reality there. I almost used the word I intended not to use.

Well, in conclusion let us use it. We might as well, because when we drop it we do not thereby rid ourselves of the experiences for which it has stood. Edmund Burke found it difficult to draw up an indictment against a whole people. It is even more difficult to indict a whole race. Mankind has not been using that word 'God' all these ages without having something real which it was trying to say. Endeavor to be an atheist and see. You never can get rid of all of God. Ah, that unescapable residue of God! For still we are inwardly laid hold on from above by loyalties which seem to us to be greater than ourselves, for which at our best we know we ought to live and, if need be, die. That would be a queer experience in a merely materialistic world.

In our day an entire nation has tried to get rid of God. Russia has thrown out the ancient church, broken down the old worship, denied Deity, and by every means at its disposal is trying to teach atheism to its youth, but even Russia has not succeeded in getting rid of all of God. It lays upon its devotees a binding loyalty. It lifts before the people what seems to it a sacred task, demanding absolute devotion, utter self-abnegation, complete worship. One of the best descriptions of communism yet written has come from an exiled Russian Greek Catholic who, in an essay on "The Religion of Communism," describes it as being like every religion in having dogmas, catechisms, an all-embracing relation to life, and taking possession of the whole soul. So Paul said in Athens long ago about a system that he did not believe in, "In all things I perceive that ye are very religious."

As for ourselves, we cannot get rid of that unescapable residue of God, that sense of something commanding in life—above us, not beneath; to be served, not merely to be used—whose right it is to say *Go!* and we must go, to say, it may be, *Die!* and we ought to die.

My friends, if you have that much of God in you, as you love your life, you had better get the rest of him. For, after all, only two major pictures of this universe are possible. The

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first depicts it as against us, with our planet a raft aimlessly drifting on a sea without a shore, so that all our best ideals are ultimately illusions, all our utmost loyalties but endeavors that fall at last into the abyss. It would not be so bad to live in a godless universe like that if a man did not have already in him so much of God that he cannot get rid of : this spiritual life so far and away the most priceless treasure that we have, so that to see it thus cheated and its high promise made a lie of is intolerable and incredible. Upon the other hand, the second picture of the universe is indeed a great thought : something higher than mankind has hold upon mankind. There is an idea to sink your roots into : something greater than mankind has laid hold upon mankind. Man is not the original creator of goodness, truth, and beauty. Man did not blow upon his hands and produce the kingdom of values in which alone he truly lives. Man is not our sole reliance, so that like many present-day humanists we face an antagonistic cosmos, snapping our fingers at it as though we did not care, and pretending that man alone by himself is quite capable of solving the problem of the universe.

No, something greater than mankind has hold upon mankind. How else can we make sense out of the world ? The common, modern substitute for God, the worship of man, as though, pitted against the whole cosmos, he were quite able to handle the matter, seems to me incredible. It was not man who brought the organic out of the inorganic and created life. It was not man who made himself and from the animal dreamed Christ. Man by himself today does not even want to pay the price of going on to international peace and economic justice. But something greater than man has hold on man. What Francis Thompson called the "Hound of Heaven" is after us still :

Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat—
'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.'

WHAT ABOUT GOD?

My friends, I have not painted a miniature of God for you to carry home with you today. God, as another said, never sat for his photograph. Distrust anybody who thinks he has a photograph of the Eternal. But the Universal Mind, the Unseen Friend, the Life in whom dwell goodness, beauty, and truth, the Purpose, mightier than man's purpose, that has laid hold on man—before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

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OUR inherited idea of Deity, it is commonly insisted today, goes back to old Hebrew conceptions born in an ancient land where men still thought the earth flat, with Sheol, the place of the dead, a little way below and the heavens a few miles above. If in our modern world, the complainants say, God is to be credible and intelligible, we must grasp a new and more adequate conception of him, starting from different premises and scaled to different dimensions.

This demand for a more worthy and adequate conception of God has struck many people as news and shocking news at that. As a matter of fact, achieving a worthier idea of God has always been the problem of religion. Only a dead religion can escape it. Every living religion grows and, growing, seeks more adequate conceptions of the Eternal. Indeed, the glory of the Hebrew-Christian tradition lies in having done that—its history can be told in terms of that. Moreover, so far from condescending to the ancient Hebrews, we shall be fortunate if we handle our problem in this realm as courageously and fruitfully as they handled theirs. "The Lord is a great God," said the psalmist. That sounds as though even then they were reaching out for a larger idea of God. Of course they were!

Let us briefly summarize the amazing story of the development of the idea of God in the Hebrew-Christian tradition. Go back to the earliest stages of Hebrew thought, and Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, is associated with a mountain, Sinai. I have been on top of that mountain, where Jehovah was once supposed to have talked personally with Moses. Sometime I hope to climb Mount Olympus, on whose summit Zeus, the God of the Greeks, was supposed to dwell. The idea is precisely the same. Many a people had a mountain god. So Jehovah on Sinai's top could hide Moses in the

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cleft of a rock, forbidding him to see his face but allowing him to see his back.

In such primitive fashion the Hebrews began their idea of God. They even pictured him walking in the garden in the cool of the day and hunting for Adam beneath the trees. But the centuries passed. The Hebrews were in Palestine, which, although it is no larger than Vermont, seemed to them a great land. No longer were they thinking of Jehovah as living on top of distant Sinai. He was with them in Palestine. They worshiped him on every high hill. He filled Canaan. Their idea of him had expanded and grown, and as they thought of that and then thought back to the old conception of God upon Sinai, they said, "The Lord is a great God."

Nevertheless, they did not conceive him as outside of Canaan. No people at that stage of mankind's development supposed that a people's god could be found outside of that people's land—all gods were geographically limited. That is what David meant when, driven out by Saul to the Philistine cities, he said, "They have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go, serve other gods." The Hebrews then did not dream that you could worship Jehovah except on Jehovah's ground. Other countries, other gods!

That is what the memorable words of Ruth meant when, coming across the Jordan gorge from the land of Moab, where she had always worshiped Moab's god, Chemosh, she accompanied Naomi to Bethlehem, where Jehovah was God. "Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Change countries, change gods!

Centuries passed. World-wide lines of communication opened up. People could not keep their gods geographically limited. In the apprehension of the Hebrew people, Jehovah had expanded now to be the God of all the earth. "It is he that sitteth above the circle of the earth," said the Great Isaiah, "and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers."

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And as they thought of that they said, "The Lord is a great God."

Still there was heaven above and Sheol, the place of the dead, beneath. Did God have anything to do with those? When we think about working out a new and larger idea of God, let us go back and see what they did, laying the foundations of anything we shall ever do in that respect! They would not let God stay little. That is what the psalm means:

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me.

That psalm represents one of the most magnificent enlargements of the idea of God in the history of human thought. He was God, not simply of the earth, but of the sky and of the abode of the dead, and as they thought of it they said, "The Lord is a great God."

Then, after centuries, the Hebrew-Christian tradition moved out into the Greek world. That presented a serious problem. Hellenism impregnated the minds of that ancient world into which young Christianity went so venturesomely forth. No problem do we face in trying to adapt the gospel to a new world-view which those Christians did not face when they went out into that amazing world of Greek philosophy. But they did not give up God; they deepened their idea of God. "He is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being"; "God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him"; "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God." God spiritualized! And as they reached out to grasp this deeper thought, they cried, "The Lord is a great God."

Still, however, they had the earth in the center, with the sun, moon, and stars going round it, a cozy place without great distances. Then the crucial hour struck, and Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler came, and men moved out into an

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incredibly vast universe. They did not, however, give up God. Multitudes thought they would have to. That is why they fought the new view so. They were afraid man would have to give up God. But he did not. He did what he has always done when he has faced a situation like that—enlarged and deepened his conception of God. That is what Addison's hymn means, written in 1712, when the new world-view was coming to its full flower and man was facing the incredible distances and mechanical regularities of the heliocentric universe:

In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
For ever singing as they shine,
'The Hand that made us is divine.'

That is to say, "The Lord is a great God."

Today we face the same situation again: a new revelation about the universe—law-abiding beyond our power previously to think, a world infinite and infinitesimal, physical and psychological, such as never dawned on the imaginations of our forefathers. In June, 1918, a new star blazed in the sky. A new star? No, that star blazed in the days of Alfred the Great, but the light just reached us. A great new universe is here, and in consequence the demand grows vocal that we must have a new idea of God—if, say some, we need any idea of God at all. There's the rub. Perhaps now we shall have to surrender God. Perhaps now, they fear, in this universe so new we cannot maintain any idea of God.

That fear fails to take into account the nature and history of human thought. Repeatedly in the Hebrew-Christian tradition, to which we belong, we have faced this issue, where we had either to grasp a deeper conception of God or else give up God altogether, and we have never given him up yet. Neither will we surrender God now. We will grasp a worthier idea of him. That thing is happening with us which has happened ever since our thought of God started with stories of Sinai and the Garden of Eden. Some people stand looking back and saying, God is gone! but the rest of us are

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standing in reverence before a vaster universe and are saying, The Lord is a great God.

If this is the story of the development of the idea of God in our own tradition so that that tradition can say about itself what Paul said about himself, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things," let us try to help ourselves in dealing with this present confusion about God.

¶ In the first place, we should not be upset by religion's 'growing pains.' To be sure, the discomfort is irritating. In particular, mankind is incorrigibly lazy, would like to stop progressing, and especially would always prefer to stop thinking. Who is it said that no human being ever did any thinking unless he absolutely had to? The hardest work in the world is thinking, and especially getting larger thoughts.¹ It would be comfortable, then, if we could say about God, That is the final thought of him; that finishes our concept of Deity, and we shall never have to think about it again. But, after all, is there any one of us who would choose that? Just where would we stop in this long story of man's developing conception of the Eternal? With Sinai? With the geographically limited god? With the god of the old astronomy? We know we are unpayably indebted to those forefathers of ours who went through the discomfort of expanding religious experience and thought, and came forth with a guerdon and reward to show for it, "a great God."

Experts have estimated that a pound of honey may cost forty thousand miles of flying on the part of the bees. A family may eat a pound of honey on its griddle cakes for breakfast as a matter of course, but what it meant to the bees! So every beautiful thing in our idea of God has had its cost—its forty thousand miles of flying. As we look back upon our forefathers, thankful for the contribution which they have made to our idea of God, so will our children look back on this generation and estimate our worth in part by what we do now, when once more religion reaches out for a more adequate conception of the Eternal.

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To be sure, this process is confusing and always has been. They called Socrates an atheist. They made him drink the hemlock as an atheist. Socrates an atheist! Of course, what that meant was that he denied the contemporary ideas of God, the pantheon of the Greek deities on Olympus, with their battles and amours. But he was no atheist. He had so splendid an idea of God, as Plato interprets him, that centuries after his martyrdom his name was often coupled with Christ's by the Christian fathers of the church, and his sayings were quoted as though from the Bible itself.

Many people do not know that the early Christians were themselves called atheists. They were hated all up and down the Roman Empire and were flung to the lions as atheists. Of course, what that meant was that they denied the current ideas of the pagan gods, but in fact they were working out an idea of God, in terms of spirit and love, to which the future belonged. This fact applies even to men like Voltaire. It is amazing to note how a bad name clings to a dog, as the proverb says, or to a man like Voltaire.

Multitudes of people think Voltaire an atheist. Voltaire did not come within reaching distance of being an atheist. What he denied was current ideas of God. The Roman Catholic idea of God in the France of his day, an intolerant god who wished all non-Catholics banished or burnt—in him Voltaire disbelieved. The god of the Calvinists in his day, who foreordained unborn babes by the million to eternal damnation—in him Voltaire disbelieved. Voltaire was one of the greatest humanitarians of history. He had in him many things both lovely and unlovely, but he cared about people, especially people whom other people had wronged, and the only God he could believe in was a God who loved people.

When Voltaire was an old man, Benjamin Franklin called on him in Paris. Franklin had with him his seventeen-year-old grandson, and when they parted the American philosopher asked the French philosopher to give the boy a blessing. The chronicler says it was a solemn moment for the spectators as Voltaire stretched his lean fingers over the boy's head

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and said, "My child, God and Liberty, remember those two words!"

We need not be upset by religion's 'growing pains.' This generation will not give up God.

In the second place, we should recognize frankly that to our limited and partial minds the real God is incomprehensible. We, with our minds that have been developing for a few millennia upon this wandering planet in the sky, cannot adequately and literally grasp the compass of the Eternal.

The immediate result of the fact that the real God is always to us incomprehensible is that we must think of him in terms of symbolism. Whenever anybody thinks of anything universal he has to think in symbolic terms. The mathematicians know that even mathematical formulas are symbolic. I have an engineer friend who is trying to make relativity real to my poor mind by picturing a shuffleboard game on a ship's deck, with the stick relative to the player's posture, and the player's posture relative to the deck's slope, and the deck's slope relative to the pitch of the sea, and the pitch of the sea relative to the earth's rotation, and the earth's rotation relative to the solar universe—so on *ad infinitum*. It is a somewhat desperate endeavor to make a large idea real to a small mind, with a picture.

Yet when we come to think of the great God, what else can we do? Sometimes I think it would be worth while to preach a series of sermons on symbols, because we use them constantly and so many people do not know what they are doing when they do use them. We go to one of Wagner's operas, and it is all symbolic. Remember the Rhinegold and the Rhinemaidens singing in the river! Now, if there is anything absurd it is three girls singing at the top of their voices under water. When we hear the opera, however, it is not absurd. The maidens are a symbol of the innocence of gold before it was perverted by the greed of men.

All life is full of symbols. A handshake is a symbol, a lifted hat is a symbol, a kiss is a symbol, the country's flag is a symbol. What is that keepsake in your pocketbook? It is a little thing, but it reminds you; it has associations; it

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makes you think of somebody. What is that wedding ring upon your finger? I well remember when my mother lost her wedding ring. I remember how we all searched for it and how she wept. It was not the marriage, but it was the symbol. What is the cross in the chancel? That is Christianity's keepsake. That is Christianity's wedding ring. That is Christianity's flag.

When, now, we think of the great God, we have to use symbols. We take some element within our experience and lift it up as far as we can reach and use it to help us think about him. We call him a rock, and a fortress, and a high tower. We call him father, and mother, and husband, and friend. We call him Ancient of Days and the Hound of Heaven. Men call him the eternal lotus flower and the rose of Sharon and the bright and morning star. And Christians say they see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. These are all symbols of the great God.

Long ago Verazzano, one of the early explorers, landed upon the Accomac Peninsula and, looking out across Chesapeake Bay, thought it was the Pacific. Would you laugh at him? I would not. In how many particulars he was right! First, there is a Pacific Ocean; it does exist. Second, in general he had the right direction; to be sure, the ocean was twenty-five hundred miles farther on, but he was headed right. And third, Chesapeake Bay has the same kind of water in it that the Pacific has. It is far truer to think of the Pacific Ocean in terms of Chesapeake Bay than it is to deny the Pacific Ocean altogether.

That fact needs to be faced today by some of our too-impatient minds.) Recognizing that all our thoughts of God are inadequate, sometimes even childish, seeing that we cannot with our partial thought grasp the full compass of the Eternal, we are tempted to give up God altogether. But this is the wrong approach. It is far truer to think of God in terms of an inadequate symbol than not to think of him at all. The great God is; our partial ideas of him are partly true.

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The first consequence of this is to make a man temperate and tolerant toward other people's ways of thinking about God. Here is my friend, for example, bowing before the image of his saint. I cannot do that, but I am not scornful. I see what he is doing. He is thinking of the Pacific Ocean in terms of Chesapeake Bay. And what is more, he gets more out of that and thinks more truly than some of our too-hasty minds denying that there is any Pacific Ocean at all.

Or here is another man who says, I am an atheist. And after talking with him I see that he is not an atheist. What he is denying is not God, but some popular picture of God. That is what most atheism is. There is very little of the Simon-pure article, and sometimes one can help a man like that by making him see that when the little gods go, the great God comes. One can send him out saying: The gods are dead! Long live God!

Nevertheless, we should not leave the matter there. What we have said about symbolic thinking concerning God seems to me true and important, but it is not the end of the matter, and if one takes it for the end one leaves God too vague to do business with. Let us, therefore, say this further thing: God is very great, but he has a near end where he literally touches us. How important are the consequences from that fact—God has a near end!

Recently I visited once more my island off the coast of Maine and fell in love again with the sea. Now, I do not know the whole sea. It is very great. I never sailed the tropic ocean where the Orinoco and the Amazon pour out their floods through primeval woods. I never watched the Antarctic sea where Byrd today presses his perilous journey over the polar ice-pack. Wide areas of the sea are to me unknown, but I know the sea. It has a near end. It washes my island. I can sit beside it and bathe in it and sail over it, and be sung to sleep by the music of it.

So is God. He is so great that in his vastness we can think of him only in symbolic terms, but he has a near end. Indeed, the nub of the whole inquiry about the nature of

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Deity lies in the answer to this question: Where do we think in our experience we touch the near end of God? Do we think that only matter is the near end of him and that all the God there is is simply physical, or do we think that in spiritual life at its best we have touched the near end of Deity, and that when we start with that and think out through that as far as we can go, we are thinking most truly about him?

To believe in the Christian God is to believe that in spiritual life at its best we have touched the hither side of God. Whatever more he may be, he is that. Ask the New Testament what God is, and the New Testament says, "God is love." Say to the New Testament, then, Where do we reach him? and it answers, "He that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him." That is God's near end.

Of course, this is what the 'divinity of Jesus' means. Many people are troubled because they cannot believe that all of the great God was in Jesus. Of course, all of the great God was not in Jesus. The omnipresence of the great God was not in Jesus. The omnipotence of the great God, swinging the eternal stars, was not in Jesus. No intelligent theology ever meant by the 'divinity of Jesus' what some people think is implied in it, but this it does mean, that in the spiritual life and character of Christ we touch the near end of God. There God reaches us. There he washes our island.

This puts vitality into our dealing with the Divine. I know a man against whom enemies rose up, and he was tempted to vindictiveness, but when the hour struck for his possible revenge he held his hand because the magnanimity of Christ was in him. That was the near end of God. I know a man before whose desirous eyes the gains of unjust industry were stretched out, and he held his hand. That was the near end of God. There is beauty in this world, from sunrise in the desert to a poem or a symphony, that touches our spirits to finer issues and the love of which differentiates us from the beasts. That is the near end of God. There are social movements across the centuries that weave individuals into families and families into tribes and tribes into nations

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and nations into empires, which having long stood embattled, with fratricidal hatred in their hearts, now begin to say, though stammeringly, what once only the greatest of the prophets said, We will learn war no more. That is the near end of God.

Go out, then, into this generation so confused about God. If they say to us, We need a larger idea of him, let us answer, Yes. May we be forgiven because so often we mistake the Chesapeake for the Pacific! But say this other thing also: God has a near end; in everything that we call beautiful or good or true he touches us; there we do business with him. "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Do We Really Want God?

TO OUR question, Do we really want God? the average person would respond at once, Of course we do. Few habits, however, are more hostile to truth than thus taking things for granted, so that, even though at first our question may seem almost irreverent, we had better face it: Do we really want God?

In our time there are at least two kinds of people who do not desire God. First, there are those who want a carefree life unhaunted by the moral restraints and serious purposefulness involved in God. Any one acquainted with wide areas of modern literature must recognize the absence of God there, except, as a friend of mine puts it, that he still is necessary for purposes of profanity. And one sees that God is absent because, by and large, the characters themselves are of such a sort that they could not possibly desire God. If one starts in to live like Gloria Patch, for example, in Fitzgerald's novel, saying, "If I wanted anything, I'd take it. . . . I can't be bothered resisting things I want," it is plain that such a person could not conceivably desire God. A serious faith in God would cramp her style. Imagine looming up over such a character any typical expression of faith in God, like, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" It is obvious that the two are incompatible and that he who cares for one would not care for the other.

There is, however, another class of people utterly unlike the first, who also have no use for God. They are high-minded persons concerned about social welfare and giving themselves to every good cause. But they have no use for God. For, they say, man's fate is in his own hands and there is none to help man save as he helps himself; only in his intelligence and character is there hope for the world.

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Therefore, they say, all faith in God is wasted energy and lost time; if the thought that has been expended on God had been given to active endeavor after social welfare, and instead of trust in God there had been reliance on human intelligence and resource, we would be a long way farther on. So Russia goes atheist, not because it is careless of human welfare but eager for it, and atheism among us is sometimes sponsored by high-minded characters. A biographer of Edmund Gosse tells us that once, uncomfortably crowded in a London bus, he said to his companion, W. M. Rossetti, "I understand you are an anarchist." "*I am an atheist,*" replied Rossetti in a loud voice; "my daughter is an anarchist"—whereupon a sufficient number of people rose in indignant protest and left the bus to make Gosse and Rossetti comfortable. That technique would hardly avail us in New York. We are too accustomed to atheism, if not to anarchism, and, what is more, to atheists who do not even desire God, because they want man to gird up his own intelligence and character and save himself.

Then, from such people as these, who have no use for God, we come back to the church, and how unlike them we are! In hymn and anthem, sermon and prayer, we take God for granted. As for wanting to believe in him, we assume that. Listen, we say, to the glorious voices of sustaining faith, from "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" to Whittier's hymns, and, on the other hand, listen to Mr. Bertrand Russell's atheism: "I think the universe is all spots and jumps, without unity, without continuity, without coherence or orderliness or any of the other properties that governesses love. Indeed, there is little but prejudice and habit to be said for the view that there is a world at all." Certainly, we say, if that is the logical conclusion of Mr. Russell's atheism, then, of course, we want God.

Today, however, I am not going to say, Of course! The idea expressed in the word 'God' and the philosophy of life involved there are the most august that ever occupied the mind of man. They are nothing to say, Of course! about.

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Even with regard to wanting God, I propose to challenge my own conscience and yours. I am not so sure that commonly in thorough earnest we do want God. He is a serious being to want, my friends. We are asking for a weighty idea of life and a demanding ideal of living when we ask for him. Sometimes it would ease up life and relax its moral tension if there were no God.

For one thing, do we really want a universe of eternal moral law? "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"—only a light-minded person will gaily say that of course he wants that. If there is no God and materialism in some form is the alternative, then we human beings, with our mysterious moral life, are transient episodes upon this wandering island in the sky. Even so, of course there would be moral law in the sense of observed sequence of events but, after all, in human society as it is organized and run, a man who is clever enough can often get away with almost anything. Recently a young man published a letter in which he challenged anybody to show him why he should be honest. "I don't want to be great," he said; "I want to be comfortable," and on that basis he asked why he should be scrupulously honest.

It is not easy to answer that challenge. The young man's philosophy is plain: in a universe basically non-moral, with morals only transient accommodations to earthly circumstance, his problem, as he sees it, is to discover what he can get away with in order to be comfortable. Far from being wanted in that young man's life, God would seriously disturb him. In God's world nobody in the end gets away with anything. If God is, the foundations of the universe are laid in righteousness. If God is, no one ultimately tips the beam of his everlasting justice. Men who have believed in God have said with Abraham Lincoln, "If God wills that . . . every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, . . . still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'" Men who have believed in God have said,

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Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;

Though with patience he stands waiting, with exactness grinds he all.

Do we really want to live in a tremendous world like that?

Moreover, the existence of God implies the existence of a moral law far higher than the laws of earth. So Antigone in the old Greek drama defied the king. Said the king, "And didst thou dare to disobey the law?" Said Antigone,

Nowise from Zeus, methought, this edict came,

.

Nor did I deem *thine* edicts of such force
That they, a mortal's bidding, should o'erride
Unwritten laws, eternal in the heavens.

So! unwritten laws, eternal in the heavens! Certainly they are no Christmas present to be gaily accepted as a gift. They are nothing to be lightly grateful for as though they garnished the universe and made it more comfortably habitable. No, when alluring evil solicits us, do we not sometimes wish we did not believe in God and so could escape allegiance to that higher righteousness, far above what earth requires? Many men, with the word of God laid on them, have felt like that. David Livingstone, having buried the body of his wife under a great tree on the east shore of Africa, turned his face toward the jungle and wrote in his journal, "Oh my Mary, my Mary! how often we have longed for a quiet home, since you and I were cast adrift at Kolobeng." Sometimes it is terrific to believe in God and have to follow him.

A college student said to me only this last week, "Being a Christian does make life more interesting but it often makes life uncomfortable." "Of course it does. All the prophets of the world who have blazed our trails for us have felt that. Sometimes they have longed to get away from God, as Jeremiah did, crying of the word of God, which he could not escape, that it was a fire in his bones and he could not contain it. Even in our more ordinary lives there are times, are there not? when if there were no God and we could be con-

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tent with materialism, we would let down, ease up, be mildly cynical, not take life so seriously, and in general relax. Much contemporary atheism is merely the rationalization of such moral *laissez-faire*.

For some of us it is too late for that. God is. We are convinced of that. And so the foundations of the universe are laid in righteousness and our conscience is bound to a super-human allegiance. You say that is glorious. Yes, I know it is. It is the most magnificent outlook on life there is. But there are times when a man does not want to be great—only comfortable.

Again, do we want a universe with eternal moral purposes? If there is no God and physical force is the final arbiter of destiny, there is no doubt concerning the final outcome of human existence on this planet. The second law of thermodynamics, in accordance with which physical energy expends itself, will see to it in the end that the sun grows cold and that this planet, which was once uninhabitable, will be uninhabitable again. There is no responsible thinker, so far as I know, who doubts the final failure of this earth as a place of human residence. If, then, materialism is the true philosophy and physical force the ultimate reality, the time will come when the last Robinson Crusoe on this planetary island will have died and everything will be as though nothing had ever been at all.

When a man has survived the first shock of facing this fact and has settled down to it, he well may feel that, if he could accept that as the whole picture, he could let down, ease up, grow mildly cynical, not expect too much of life, make up his mind that all things come from nothing and go back to nothing again, and in general relax. Of course, to such a man the spiritual values still would be here, the love of beauty, of goodness, and of truth. They make life worth living in any case. He may well enjoy them but he probably will not expect too much of life or invest himself too deeply in it. My friends, when we do not want to be great, only comfortable, that philosophy of life can be very attractive.

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If there is no God, goodness, beauty, and truth are experiences within ourselves, altogether subjective, having no significance beyond. But if God is, then goodness, beauty, and truth are the near end of the Eternal; they are the revelation within us now of the profoundest reality of the cosmos. Whatever spiritual insight we have is living water from an eternal fountain. Whatever spiritual excellence we possess is sunshine from a central sun. The eternal world of spiritual values is the real world, and as Shelley said,

Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity.

That is a tremendous philosophy. Then the end of this earth as man's residence is not the end. Then physical force is not the final arbiter of our destiny.

Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change,
And though the mountains be shaken into the heart of the seas;

.

The Lord of Hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

You say that is glorious. I know it is glorious. It is the great tradition, the loftiest thinking of mankind in philosophy and religion. It is magnificent, but it is also tremendous—very high, very deep, very demanding on a man's life.

Once in a while a letter like the following comes from my radio audience. You are all the time talking, says the letter, about the joy, comfort, satisfaction, and inspiration of belief in God. I used to believe in God too, but I have given it up and now I think there is no God. Far from missing him, I cannot tell you how relieved I am. Probably you will not understand this, says the letter, but, as a matter of fact, I never have known such peace of mind as since I gave up God. To which I answer, Why should you suppose that I do not understand that? Of course I understand it. Faith in God, when a man takes it seriously, lays heavy claims on his life. It says to him that what ought to be can be, so that even

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in days like these, when catastrophe makes multitudes despair, a man with faith in God must still go on believing in moral causes and investing himself in them. Of course, one understands what release it is to throw off such demanding faith when we wish to be comfortable.

Dorothy L. Sayers has voiced the reaction of an unwilling soul confronting the high claims which Christ and the cross lay on one's life:

I am battered and broken and weary and out of heart,
I will not listen to talk of heroic things,
But be content to play some simple part,
Freed from preposterous, wild imaginings . . .
Men were not made to walk as priests and kings.

Thou liest, Christ, Thou liest; take it hence,
That mirror of strange glories; I am I;
What wouldst Thou make of me? O cruel pretence,
Drive me not mad so with the mockery
Of that most lovely, unattainable lie!

Of course a serious man understands that.

We have emphasized the little group of disciples who honestly tried to live up to the claims of Christ; we have forgotten how many more there must have been who were infinitely relieved when they could get away from Christ and his demanding presence. So, today, to be mildly cynical, not to care deeply about the world's peace or economic justice, to let down and ease up, would be comfortable. A man's faith in God, however, keeps saying, What ought to be can be. If one takes that faith seriously one cannot ease up.

When Beethoven's music was still regarded as an innovation, the critics were merciless. Beethoven's smaller pieces, one critic said, would live, but as for the larger pieces, they would be talked about by the professors and be allowed to lie in peace on the shelves. So the great symphonies were relegated to oblivion. But listen to Beethoven himself: "I do not fear for my works, no evil can befall them." It is splendid to believe in anything beautiful when your generation is cry-

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ing disbelief in it. And faith in God demands of us such conviction. You say it is glorious. Yes, it is the most glorious philosophy of life there is. But sometimes one does not want to be great.

In the third place, do we really desire a world in which personality has endless possibilities? If there is no God and physical force is the ultimate reality, then, of course, all is over when the body dies, and whatever we may hope to get out of this transcendent miracle of personality we must get within the scope of these few, present years. On that basis there is no excuse for a man's living ignobly, but it is sheer stupidity not to face the immense difference in one's estimate of personality and one's expectation about it when one has faith in God.

Sir Arthur Keith is one of the great British scientists. Professor Arthur Compton is one of the great American scientists. The first is an utter disbeliever; the second a thorough believer. According to Sir Arthur Keith, when a man dies he goes out like a candle: to which Professor Arthur Compton replies that the candle does not go out; its energy goes on and on to the farthest reaches of the universe. Be sure of this: if God is, one way or another our candle does not go out. Its mode of going on may be utterly different from anything we have pictured it to be. Indeed, I am sure that must be so, but one way or another, as Emerson said,

. . . What is excellent,
As God lives, is permanent,

and in manners and fashions beyond our power to imagine the candle does not go out.

Most people, I suspect, when they face that faith, say it is glorious. I say it is serious. To be trusted with a transitory life to get on with for a few years—a man can let down on that view when he feels like it. But to be trusted with a personality whose flame will not go out—that is serious. There are some of you here now shrinking from that high solemnity. You remember how Swinburne put it:

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From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Easier, isn't it? not so high or so demanding.

Indeed, come closer home and see that, if God is real, there are available resources here and now, so that we should be doing better than we are doing with our personal living. It is when we thus come close to the intimate matter of personal quality and ask ourselves whether we really want God, who can clean us up, straighten us out, expel our evil habits, and send us forth to live with disciplined and renovated character, that we see how little some of us do want God. So Augustine says that he prayed to God, "Grant me chastity and continency, but not yet."

¹In *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens tells of a French doctor immured in the Bastille, who, feeling his reason slipping, obtained permission to teach himself shoemaking. After twenty years he was released but he had for so long a time been a prisoner that he could not endure his liberty. So the former servant, to whose care he was entrusted, kept him under lock and key in a dark garret that he might feel at home and not, in terror, do himself injury. There on days when skies were blue and the sun shone cheerily, observers, through chinks in the wall, could barely make out the form bending in the twilight over his bench, tapping with his shoemaker's hammer. That is a picture of some of us. We can be free. We can be released from moral bondage into moral victory. We can. We can be strengthened with power through God's spirit in the inward man to that triumph. Do we really want it?

I have emphasized this serious matter with two kinds of people in mind. First, church people. They believe in God. They always have taken God for granted. Of all ignoble

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ways of treating God, I think he would dislike that most. Lift up your eyes on high and see what a tremendous idea of life is involved in God, and if we say we believe it, let us live it! But some one else is here, I suspect, who also needs this emphasis: the non-theistic humanist, who has been saying that faith in God is deflected energy and wasted time—as one writer puts it, “an unlawful luxury.”

One can understand why you feel so about some ideas of God and some soft and sentimental ways of believing in him, but this God we have been talking of today is no unlawful luxury! A moral universe, a superhuman allegiance, the eternal reality of spiritual values, the endless possibilities of personality—if we let ideas like that vanish from the earth, we will find ourselves by inevitable consequence plunged into sheer paganism, sunk in futility, damned by cynicism, tired out by our own aimlessness, and calling again for a faith that will put meaning and direction into life. For the living God is the Eternal Toiler, laboring within us and beyond us for a kingdom of souls in which goodness and truth triumph and beauty is enshrined, and to believe in him, join with him, give devotion to him is life and peace and power.

My one unchanged obsession, whereso'er my feet have trod,
Is a keen, enormous, haunting, never-sated thirst for God.

So Gamaliel Bradford wrote about himself. And the noblest tribute to the essential greatness and dignity of human nature is to say that, by and large, this is true about man.

*On Escaping from This World**

A MAN who has not learned to escape from this world has missed one of the elemental lessons of life. As year follows year, is not your experience like mine that one of life's most imperious demands is somehow to succeed in escaping from this world? A man cannot stand the world, its externalism, its immediacy, its noise, unless he can get away from it. Moreover, as any one can see, this is what men everywhere are trying to do. A British officer in India, warned that he was drinking too heavily, lifted his glass and said, "My friend, this is the swiftest road out of India." Quite so! It is a familiar saying in England, easily translatable into American terms, that the quickest way out of Manchester is the ginshop.

If we ask the psychologists, they will tell us what devious and dangerous roads men use to escape the world: make-believe, fantasy, rationalization—evading reality, constructing wish-worlds, and so falling at last upon ineffective living or, it may be, insanity. Men are making a sorry business out of this deep, human need to escape the world.

Of late, therefore, the whole idea of escape has fallen into the shadow. It is pathological, we are told; we ought not to want it. The world's realities are our conditioning environment. Face them, we are exhorted, and quit this desire to escape. So a man tries that, but no man can keep that up long. If he is one kind of person, he turns to a monastery to escape the world; if he is another kind, he turns to drink or drugs; if he is another kind, he turns to music or nature. If he is a Goethe, wanting to create something beautiful, he says, "Without absolute solitude I am unable to produce anything at all." If he is a Wordsworth, desiring for himself and his generation an enriched spiritual life, he says, "The world is too much with us."

* A Sermon preached on the last Sunday of the Old Year.

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You see, it is no adequate answer to the soul's imperious need of escape from the world to tell us it is wrong. Can it be wrong when it is so necessary? Can it be wrong when Jesus himself so needed it, sought it, was empowered by it? Listen to the Fourth Gospel: "Jesus . . . withdrew again into the mountain himself alone." So he escaped from the world. You say he returned to it again. Yes, with an impact such as no other personality has ever made, but the strength of his blow upon the world was proportioned to the lift of it above the world. He withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.

On the last day of the old year, as one thinks of the world we have left behind and of the world ahead, is there not a secret here which all of us need? Nietzsche said once, "If thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee." So some of us feel about this world. We live in it, are obsessed by it, look into it until it begins to look into us. Then we must get away. It is not a question whether we will try to escape; we must. The question is whether we know how to escape, whether we have mastered the high art and indispensable spiritual technique of escaping from the world.

Hazlitt tells us that once Coleridge was to preach on a Sunday morning, as Coleridge sometimes did preach, in an English parish church. So Hazlitt walked ten miles in the mud across the countryside to hear him, and, in sentences that even yet are marked by awe, he tells us how, arriving late, he entered just before Coleridge stood in the pulpit and in a voice that filled the sanctuary announced his text: "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone."

Surely, an aspect of the Master's experience is there uncovered which at the beginning of another year we lack—and need. Is it unfair to our generation to say that it is marked by three characteristics—externalism, immediacy, and noise? By externalism I mean that we are pressed upon by things, that the whole foreground of our days is littered up by them. By immediacy I mean that our minds are set on tasks instantly to be done, planned today, finished tomorrow, so that

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life is a very rapid turnover, marked by urgency and speed. By noise no one needs to be told what is meant, for nothing in this world today is so difficult to escape. Now, such characteristics cannot be kept on the outside of us; they dig in; they invade our culture. We are tempted to judge all of life externally in terms of size. We are tempted to trust in swift, slick schemes to get even beautiful things done, as witness the advertisements: learn to play the piano in thirty days; become a persuasive personality or a powerful public speaker by a correspondence course. As for noise, loud publicity does get the limelight, and even in music noise seems to some of us the one indisputable attribute of much we hear.

Such characteristics, dominant in a generation and pervading its culture, creep also into its religion. How they have crept into our American churches until all the religion some of us have left is what is called "practical Christianity"—that is to say, busy, energetic effort, outward tasks for immediate goals noisily worked for! My friends, that is not practical Christianity; it is too cheap and shallow to be practical. Something profound has been left out of it—he withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.

To be sure, it is easy to guess what some one here is saying about this. The preacher, you say, actually dares to present religion as a means of retreating from life, but that is the perversion of religion. To run away from the crucial, social tasks of this generation and on some mountaintop of seclusion, trusting God instead, forget it all; to make mystical solitude a lotus land to flee to when life is too much for us—that makes religion a curse. That is why in Russia they had to drive God out of heaven in order to get something done on earth. So many think today.

To all this I answer, My friend, religion, like any beautiful thing, like music or art or nature or home, can be used as a place of selfish retreat from the world, but that is its caricature. We are not going to give up any one of them because they can be abused. We will escape to music and come back with a fresh grip on life. We will retreat to nature and return refreshed and reëmpowered. We will fall back upon our

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homes and, if God grant, we will emerge again like Wendell Phillips, going out to plead an unpopular cause, his wife's words ringing in his ears as he left the door, "Wendell, don't shilly-shally." We need something more than mere busyness to get our work done well. We need backing; we need power; and the deep sources of our power are not in this world's externalism, immediacy, and noise, but far aloof from them.

As for Jesus, we may not describe him as making of mystical solitude a lotus land to flee to when life was too much for him. Did any one ever succeed in doing so much for this world with the time at his disposal? Apparently, his father Joseph died when Jesus was a boy. Joseph is never heard of after Jesus was twelve years old. So Jesus had to support the family as the village carpenter until his younger brothers were old enough to take up the burden. He had no chance at any public ministry until he was nearly thirty and then, after a year and a half or thereabouts, he was hanging on a cross. In the meantime he lived busily and urged activity: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven"; "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." That is not running away from life. But we never can understand why it amounted to so much in the end unless we know his deep secret: into the mountain himself alone.

Surely, if a man has any maturity of life and thought, he must see that this comes close home to him. Out of years of intimate dealing with individuals in confessional conferences, no truth stands out more unmistakably than this: any man who tries to handle his life merely with the technique of energy, activity, and busyness, comes at last to the place where he cannot go on. When tragedy befalls and the heart is stunned or broken, one cannot handle *that* merely by being energetic. When youth passes and the first vital excess of energy runs down and life depends on discovering meanings that will not wear out with the passing years, one cannot handle *that* merely by being energetic. When temptations

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come and desire and duty are terribly arrayed against each other in the soul, one cannot handle *that* by mere busyness. Then the technique of restless activity fails us and we need the deeper, serener power which enabled Jesus to stay patient in Nazareth, to keep his head level when the crowd urged him to insurrection, to keep his spirit sweet when the crowd hated him, to walk through Gethsemane to Calvary. Who cannot feel in that life its deep undertone: he withdrew again—and again—into the mountain himself alone?

Let us try to make this as pertinent to our practical help as possible by imagining some specific gains which Jesus won from this experience.

For one thing, like all the rest of us, Jesus was sometimes sickened by the world. We commonly say Jesus loved the world, but we surely do not mean that the world looked to him like a beautiful landscape, so that he was charmed by it, that it sounded to him like a symphony and he was enchanted by it. On the contrary, read the Gospels and see if the basic impression is not plain that Jesus was sickened by the world.

Was he merely loving the world when he denounced those who "devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers"? Was he merely loving the world when he said, "Ye are of your father the devil. . . . He is a liar, and the father thereof"? Was he loving the world when he said to his disciples, "Neither cast your pearls before the swine"? No, this world made Jesus sick at heart as it does any good man. And especially when he had a spiritual message and the gross minds and furious passions of the mob utterly mistook his meaning and they came to take him by force and make him king, he was sick at heart.

Only, you see, a man must not stay that way. For this is the paradox of saviorhood, that while a wise and good man will at times be sickened by the world, a wise and good man must not remain so. For if a man is merely sickened by the world, then he cannot even know the world. No great thing ever can be known except by love. We would not thoroughly know a person if we did not love him. We cannot thoroughly know a great picture or a great symphony if we do not love

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it. Never let the physical scientists run away with and monopolize that great word 'know.' Some things cannot be known by measurement; they must be known by love. You would not know your child if you did not love him. You could not know Chartres Cathedral if you did not love it. Yes, take even a physical matter like the sea. Were its length and breadth and depth all known, its currents and its tides, the chemical composition of its water computed, not by that only would the sea be fully known. Something is missing from the charts and formulas that only a man like Masfield knows:

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's
 shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn breaking.

True, is it not? that in order to know one must love. And if that is true from a little child to the sea, it is true about the world. Consider, then, what happened to the Master on the mountain. He went up sickened by the world; he came down ready to die for it.

Is there anything that some of us need more? Ah, my soul! you do need a place alone and quiet where the sediment will settle, where disgust and bitterness will die in an altitude too high for them to live in, where, knowing all this world's evil, you will learn again to love the wayward multitude of blundering men and women, to love them until afresh you see them at their best, to love them until again you will take up your tasks on their behalf. In the end, it may be, if we learn well enough the uses of that mountaintop, men will remain unaware that sometimes they made us sick and will remember about us only that we were lovers of our fellow men.

Again, Jesus faced situations, as we do, where he could not do much more for the world until, first of all, he had done something for himself. At that point our typical American Christianity is often pitifully shallow. It constantly says to us, Get busy and give yourself to the help of men; expend

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yourself for the saving of the world. All of which, however well-intentioned and often useful, commonly leaves out a major matter: namely, that it does small good to give oneself to men if one has only a feeble self to give. The first obligation of a man who wishes to be useful concerns himself. Of what good is it to expend oneself when one has no self to expend?

Whenever the Christian church leaves out an essential part of its message, some movement always rises to emphasize it. That happened with Christian Science. Our churches had left out a vitally important truth, that it is possible in daily life so to demonstrate the available presence of the living God as incalculably to heighten the tone of one's health and happiness, and through that empty place in the church's message walked Christian Science.

So, of late, the churches have often forgotten the deep secrets of inward communion with God, from which come peace and power, guidance, and radical renovation of personal character, and the Oxford groups are capitalizing the deficiency. I am no more an Oxford-group man than I am a Christian Scientist, but I do understand why they help some people. Many in our churches have been urged, whether in the name of an energetic church program or a high-powered social campaign, busily to help save the world, when all the time they have known that their real problem was inside themselves, that they had no selves worth giving to the world, that they were split and disintegrated personalities, that they were harboring secret sins which they knew to be sins, so that their life was shadowed with hypocrisy, that not only charity but Christianity begins at home, that much of this high-powered salesmanship about saving the world leaves the deepest needs of the human soul unfaced and unmet, and that they must have something radically done within them before ever they can do much for the world.

I wonder if it is an accident that after the mountaintop communion of the Master the Fourth Gospel says that, coming down, he walked upon the tempestuous waves of Galilee, and other Gospels add that the winds ceased. Many of you

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do not believe that such a thing really happened; no sea storm ever was so stopped, you say, nor did any one walk upon the water. No more do I believe that it really happened, but because we do not literally accept such miracle stories is no reason for regarding them as meaningless. They never will tell that kind of story about us, that we came down from a mountaintop communion so radiant with power that we walked the stormy waves and stilled the winds. Not even if we had lived in first-century Palestine, where such miracles were easily credited, would they ever have told that about us. But they did tell it about Jesus. Something happened in him on that mountaintop so that when he came down he seemed to his disciples to walk the world's tempests and quell them.

Finally, Jesus faced situations, as we do, where he had to escape from the world's low compulsions by deliberately putting himself under the highest compulsion. All of us, willy-nilly, live under one kind of compulsion or another. As the years pass something *gets* us. It may be one habit or another, this motive or that, a high purpose or a low one, but something gets us. Not even Jesus could escape that. We read that they were about to come and take him by force. That is a true picture of the way life treats all of us. Around every soul in this company compulsions rise; out of external environment or interior habit they come to take us by force; and the only way of escaping these low compulsions of the world, as the Master saw, is deliberately to put ourselves under high compulsion.

That is the essential meaning of prayer—deliberately to put ourselves under the control and compulsion of the highest. Many people never get that idea of prayer. They think prayer means begging God to give them something they want which he never would give them if they did not ask, and so, having prayed for many things and not receiving them, they decide that prayer is a failure and tell their friends that they now are liberated from that old superstition. Liberated? That is not liberation; that is inverted fundamentalism.

You see, there are two kinds of fundamentalism, direct

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and inverted. Here is a man who thinks that prayer means persuading God to change his mind and alter his will, and, so conceiving prayer, he goes on praying for everything he wants from business success to good weather. That is an altogether-too-familiar form of direct fundamentalism. But here is another man, who also pictures prayer as an endeavor to persuade God to change his mind and alter his will, and, so conceiving prayer, he throws prayer scornfully away. That attitude is fundamentalism too, inverted fundamentalism, based upon exactly the same ideas of prayer that extreme fundamentalists hold. I beg of you, do not be either kind. True prayer is not an endeavor to change God's will; it is an endeavor to release God's will into our lives. True prayer is not an endeavor to persuade God to do what we wish; it is an endeavor so to relate ourselves to God that he can do in and for and through us what he wishes. True prayer never says, Thy will be changed; it says tremendously, Thy will be done.✓

The prayer the Master offered in Gethsemane was surely not offered there for the first time. Is not that the way he always prayed on any mountaintop, himself alone? "Not what I will, but what thou wilt." So all great souls in their greatest moments have always prayed. Around them flowed the strong compulsions of this world and they escaped to the high compulsion and came back again, no longer to be compelled by the world but to compel it.

For this is the ultimate mystery of the mountaintop, that when one withdraws himself alone, behold, he is not alone!

On Learning How to Pray

AS FAR as the records go, only one thing did the disciples explicitly ask Jesus to teach them—how to pray. At first sight it seems strange that they should have asked him this for those disciples had prayed all their lives. When, however, they came under the influence of Jesus and saw what prayer meant to him, it dawned on them that although they had prayed from their youth up they did not know how. "It came to pass," says the Gospel of Luke, "as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples." Evidently they had been observing what prayer meant in his life. He went into it in one mood and came out in another; power was released; praying to him was not a form but a force. And when beside his prayer they put what they called praying, it was plain that, while the same word covered both, the meanings of the two were far apart. So these religiously trained disciples, who always had prayed, wanted Jesus to teach them how.

Note that this awakened interest in prayer came not at all from new arguments about it but from a new exhibition of its power. Here before their very eyes they saw a personality in whom prayer was vital and influential. The more they lived with him the more they saw that they never could explain him unless they understood his praying, and so, not at all because of new arguments but because of amazing spiritual powers released in him by prayer, they wanted him to tell them how to pray.

It is an impressive experience to face a personality whom we cannot explain until we understand his prayer. A superficial brook can be explained without going far but the river Nile is inexplicable until one knows the high mountains in the center of the continent and the rains that fall there. Personalities like that we do discover, not simply among great

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figures of history, but in homely places. Here, for example, was a woman who, comparatively young, was left a widow with five children and who resolutely shouldered the practical and spiritual responsibilities which that entailed. By careful management she saw the children through college. On the day of her burial, in her ninety-sixth year, one of the children said they never had seen her impatient or distraught to the point of giving up, even in the most troubled times. One son became president of a great railway system; another became president of a state university; another became a leading pioneer in his department of medical research. That kind of consequence in a family is no accident. That nother was an extraordinary personality. It was the university president who said to me that no one could understand her who did not understand her prayer. It was a force, he said; it released radiance and power.

I think I know all the arguments for and against prayer and I would not minimize them. No one wishes to pray unintelligently. But prayer as a force in personalities so powerful that we cannot explain them until we know their praying, goes deeper than argument. Some young man fresh from a college class in philosophy assures me that prayer is nonsense, quite irrational in this modern world. All the while he is talking I keep thinking of some hard-hitting, hard-living man like Henry M. Stanley, coming out of hell in Africa and saying that prayer made him stronger morally and mentally than all his non-praying companions and lifted him hopefully over the wilderness of forest tracks, eager for each day's labors and fatigues. What I want to ask is, What is that force? Never mind about the name! What is that power and how does one get into contact with it and handle it? As the disciple said to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Let us condense into a brief statement some of the things the great pray-ers of history and the Master, above all, would tell us about how to pray.

For one thing, they surely would say, Pray *receptively*. That is one of the primary meanings of prayer: "Spirit of God, descend upon my heart." Yesterday, let us suppose, you

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had a busy schedule. You put your back tensely and aggressively into the morning's work, and then in the afternoon you went to Carnegie Hall and heard a glorious symphony. You had to change your technique. You had been active; you became receptive. You had been aggressive; you became appreciative. You had been doing something to your world; now you let another world do something to you. What a new kind of experience that is, and how indispensable!

The failure of much popular praying arises from the fact that when we pass from our ordinary, aggressive, workaday world into what we call prayer, we do not thus change our technique. Despite our supposition that we are praying, we still are secular. That is, we are aggressively trying to force our selfish will upon the world. To many people prayer is only an additional way of getting what they want, a kind of spare tire to be used when the others fail. They are as much go-getters when they pray as at any other time, and the whole tone of their praying is, "God, get me what I want!"

Indeed, so prevalent is this idea in popular religion that, alas! many ministers still preach it. The angriest letter I have received this year came from a minister who, having correctly understood something I said over the air about prayer, came back with wrathful protest, insisting that, to use his phrase, "prayer moves the arm of God." So! A mortal man dares desire to move the arm of God! My friends, nothing much more essentially irreverent than that is conceivable. Upon the contrary, true prayer begins only when a human soul desires above all else that the arm of God should move him.

"I would fain be to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man." Who said that? A contemporary liberal? No. An old German mystic. "Not my will, but thine, be done." Who said *that*?

All great souls have prayed receptively. "I will hear," said the psalmist, "what God the Lord will speak." Prayer is the hospitality of the soul entertaining the Most High.

A young man who had recently graduated from a Western university once sought membership in this church, and when

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I asked him the effect of his college course on his religious faith he said that on the whole his faith was stronger at the end than at the beginning. When I inquired how he explained that, he said, "Mountains." "Mountains!" I exclaimed. "Yes," he answered, "mountains." And when I inquired what mountains had to do with it, he replied: "A part of every year I spend among the high mountains. I have seen sunrise on too many mountain peaks ever to doubt the reality of God." Have we anything remotely approaching that in our lives, even though we have to experience it amid the cañons of these city streets? Sunrise on mountains!

In the second place, pray *affirmatively*. The trouble with much popular praying is that it is mainly begging. It conceives the Eternal as a universal organized charity and of ourselves as impecunious applicants, saying, Give me! Clearly, that involves a pagan theory of God, but, worse than that, in actual practise it so damages men's souls that any minister, dealing intimately with individuals, should welcome the chance to sound a warning. One repeatedly hears the familiar complaint: I prayed long and earnestly about this temptation, this habit, this need, and it did no good. Of course it did no good. Habitually behind that complaint one finds a kind of praying which, far from doing good, does harm. Prayer holds the object of its wish in the center of attention; the more earnest a man's prayer, the more stoutly his need occupies his thought. Picture, then, a man praying about sickness, for example, holding some illness in the center of his solicitude and saying in effect, I am sick, very sick, see how sick I am; give me health! Any one intelligent about psychological processes knows that the more earnestly a man prays like that the more sick he is likely to be. Run your imagination out, therefore, into other realms of need—sexual passion, discouragement, anxiety. You see, the more we hold such things in the center of attention, even in prayer, the more they will obsess and control our living. In consequence, many people come to the minister saying, Long and earnestly I prayed about this need and it did no good. And a

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wise minister says, My friend, when one considers the way you have prayed, you are lucky that it did not ruin you.

One finds no praying like that in the New Testament or in the lofty areas of the Old Testament, or in the great souls of the church at their best. True prayer is affirmative. It turns its back on our wretched, miserable needs and stretches out a taking hand to appropriate the inexhaustible resources of the divine grace. It says,

The Lord *is* my shepherd; I *shall not* want.
He *maketh* me to lie down in green pastures;
He *leadeth* me beside still waters.
He *restoreth* my soul.

That is affirmative prayer. It says, "I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." That is affirmative prayer.

Every one knows that at Worms Luther defied the emperor at the risk of his life, but most people do not know what Luther was praying when he did it. But he has told us. "O Thou my God, stand by me, against all the world . . . do Thou do it, Thou must do it, Thou alone. It is indeed not my cause, but Thine." That is affirmative prayer. It is like drums and bugles to a man's soul. In sickness it gives tonic thoughts; in anxiety it orients life around sustaining faiths; in discouragement it centers attention on inexhaustible resources. In such praying a man retires for a little while from troubled foregrounds to the great resources in the background and actually appropriates what he needs. Such is affirmative prayer. It does not so much ask as take; it does

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not so much beg for living water as sink shafts into it and draw from it. It starts as Jesus did: "Our Father who *art*."

In the third place, pray *dangerously*. To many people the idea that prayer can be dangerous never has occurred. Of all safe things in this world, they think, a comfortable retreat from trouble, an anesthetic even for life's pains, prayer is the safest. That shows how little some people understand prayer. As a matter of historic fact, prayer has been one of the most perilous things great spirits have indulged in.

I have personal friends who prayed and now they are in the heart of Africa, living sacrificial, missionary lives. If they wanted easy lives, they prayed a few times too often. Once there was a man who could have escaped crucifixion if he had trimmed a little, but instead he went into a garden to pray and, issuing from that experience, he could not trim at all but walked straight to the cross. Behind that man there is another whom one scholar has called "the father of true prayer," Jeremiah, who often desperately wished that he could escape the severe compulsions of his duty, but who was always prevented from running away by the habit of prayer, where the Will that was greater than his will laid hold on him again and sent him back. As Jeremiah himself put it, God said to him, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and will show thee great things, and difficult."

That is a consequence of praying which the superficial pray-ers never expect but which great spirits know. What a sight it is to watch them retiring into their high backgrounds and then emerging again carrying on their consciences great things and difficult! Every forward step in the moral advancement of the race goes back to some experience like that.

The other evening I sat at home comfortably stretched out in an overstuffed chair, thinking among other things about this sermon, when of a sudden my eyes rested on a book upon the table. It is a beautiful, old, leather-bound book which once belonged to Hugh Latimer, who was burned at the stake for his faith in the sixteenth century. It still carries his name upon the flyleaf, written with his own hand. As I watched the book, I began in imagination to see Oxford Square that day

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they led him out to burn him, and across the centuries I heard again the words he spoke to his companion in martyrdom: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as, I trust, shall never be put out." Then I thought Hugh Latimer turned his eyes on me. Said he:

So you are going to preach on prayer. What do you know about praying? I am going now from my knees to the stake. Have you any idea what tremendous moral issues prayer, when it is earnest, can present to a man's conscience? You modern preachers have made prayer safe, easy, comfortable, fitted for narcotic purposes. Tell them something about dangerous praying, in which a man's duty becomes to him the compelling will of God, which he cannot escape. And you there, in your overstuffed chair, if you are going to preach about such praying, experience it a little!

So with wide and fascinated eyes I watched the old man as he walked on, going from his knees to his sacrifice.

Of course, I cannot be sure just where this may apply to each of us, but it applies. Lord, teach us to pray dangerously about some moral issue in our lives today!

Once more, pray *undiscourageably*. As Jesus said, men "ought always to pray, and not to faint." Now, most of our prayer is scaled to a short term. We ask for things immediate. We want what we want when we want it. Even in our praying the spirit of 'get rich quick' irreverently enters. That is not great praying. Great praying is always scaled to a long-term enterprise. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth"—prayer like that is handed on from one generation to another.

To be sure, at this point some one is certain to be saying, What good does that do? We want international peace and economic justice and we had better work for them, but praying does not bring them and what use is there pretending that it does? To which I answer, If by prayer you mean saying prayers or expecting God to hand out peace and justice because we request them, you are right. We, however, are taking for granted here sufficient intelligence to have thrown

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over long since childish praying which casts on God problems that God never will solve except through us. There are some kinds of prayer that are distinctly wrong and should never be indulged in. Some of the most excoriating things Jesus ever said were about ways of praying he disbelieved in. No more sarcastic picture did he ever draw than the portrait of a man who went up to the temple to pray and "stood and prayed thus *with himself*" a narrow, mean, and selfish prayer. There was plenty of praying in which Jesus cordially disbelieved, but he did teach his disciples out of the depths of their desire to lift up the great prayer for the kingdom of God on earth. Now, when he did that and when he filled that prayer with the ethical and humanitarian content which he put into it, he *did* something.

Put it this way. Beethoven wrote music far beyond the capacity both of the instruments and of the technique available in his day. We read, for example, that the solo of the C minor Concerto was played on "a miserable little box of wires, hardly more sonorous than a spinet." So Beethoven wrote music that could not adequately be rendered on the instruments of his time, music which, therefore, was in itself a prayer: Give me instruments, create for me instruments so that I can be really played. As you know, Beethoven's music, by being itself, compelled the creation of new instruments and new technique. As his biographer puts it, "Born into a day of small things he helped the day to expand by giving it creations beyond the scope of its available means of expression. So it was literally forced to improve these means and thus to grow with them—a method much used by emancipators of humanity." Indeed, yes! almost always used by emancipators of humanity. For what they do is to give men music—great ideas and ideals of justice and equality, peace and brotherhood—far beyond the implementation of their time, music which is itself a prayer: Give me instruments, create for me in practical social life instruments so that I may be played. *That* the emancipators of humanity have always done.

Suppose that you, devoutly believing in Beethoven, had

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heard the C minor Concerto at its first rendition. You would have known, would you not? that that could not possibly be the end of the story; that though it might be a long time from Beethoven to Toscanini and the Philharmonic, yet the music would bring to pass at last an orchestra which could play it properly. So we, who deeply believe in Christ and hear his music being ruined by our economic disorder and our international policies, know that that is not the end of the story. Underline this in your faith: *The future belongs to the music and not to these wretched, obsolete instruments.*

When, therefore, I say to my own conscience and to yours, Believe this and pray and work undiscourageably for this, I am saying something real. If, as Mrs. Browning says,

. . . every *wish*
Is like a prayer, with God,

then millions of Americans are not praying for peace and justice. Listen to the prayers that rise from the people. Many of our people are praying,

Bless me and my wife,
My son John and his wife,
Us four, no more. Amen.

Many are praying to get back to the lush days before 1929, despite the poverty that blasted the lives of millions even then. Munitions manufacturers are praying for profits from military and naval armaments, and every heart has its egoistic prayers. What a world of crazy praying!

When we think of it so, praying is no light matter, is it? Columbus' search for a sea route to the Indies was prayer; Edison's search for the secret of incandescence was prayer; the long accumulating desire for democracy was prayer. Yes, Napoleon's ambition to rule Europe was his prayer, and Pasteur's ambition to glorify France by making a discovery to bless mankind was his prayer. On its deepest levels, human life is a battlefield of conflicting prayers. The strongest forces in this world are these importunate desires, and when a multitude of people share a common desire, when a great prayer

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rises within millions like the tide called by the sky and filling all the bays and crannies of the human shore, it is irresistible. Prayer, when it is a caricature, is a futile retreat from reality. Prayer, when it is real, can turn the stream of centuries into new courses. Look to your prayers, then, your deep, real, genuine demands on life. Only when a great multitude that no man can number stands before the throne and with a voice like many waters cries, We are through with war and poverty; we demand peace and justice and brotherhood—only then will men invent the instruments on which such music can be played.

If some one says, This deep, interior attitude which you have been describing as prayer is certainly very different from merely saying prayers; it is rather the habitual and constant highlands and backgrounds of great living, I answer, Of course it is. What do we suppose Paul meant when he said, "Pray without ceasing"? We cannot imagine a busy man like Paul saying prayers without ceasing. To be sure, all the year ought to be more unselfish because of Christmas Day, every month more grateful because Thanksgiving comes, every day more triumphant because of Easter, all our married life the sweeter because we remember the anniversaries. There is value in special times and places. Prayers can help prayer, but prayer itself is spiritual life at its creative origin.

If some one says, Much that you have been talking of I know in my own experience but I never have called it prayer, I answer, Of course you know it. There is no possibility of high, strong life without it, and it is prayer. I beg of you, do not be so misled by the pettiness and ignorance of popular religion as to miss the fact that not only now but in all the centuries, in the great seers and saints, this has been prayer. Do not let it remain unconscious and unrecognized in you. Lift it up; make it radiant and powerful. Make your life one that people cannot fully understand unless they understand your prayer.

Be Still and Know

ONE of Pascal's sayings is that all the unhappiness of mankind is due to a single thing, that we "have not the wisdom to remain in tranquillity at home." Such a condensed summary of the cause of our trouble ought not be taken for more than it is worth but, as for the major matter, the more one considers it the more true it appears. How many evils do arise from our inability to be still!

In the spiritual life the author of the forty-sixth Psalm evidently felt this when long ago he pictured the Eternal saying to man, "Be still, and know that I am God." After this sermon was well under way, I discovered that at the beginning of the academic year President Neilson of Smith College addressed his students on this very text and, thinking in terms of English literature, as he naturally would, reminded them of a character in one of Arnold Bennett's last novels. She was a woman of the extreme modern type, unconventional in manners and morals, who to the astonishment of her worldly acquaintances took to reading Shakespeare and the Bible for diversion. One day she came upon the forty-sixth Psalm and in particular the words: "Be still, and know that I am God." She was not sure what they meant but she found herself strangely startled and impressed. She talked about them to her friends, who also admitted that they did not understand what they meant but found in them a mysterious impressiveness, some magic of the style, perhaps, some deep serenity in the idea, speaking to their hectic lives like a voice from another world. They went no further with the matter. They never did discover what the words meant but sometimes they would talk together about why it was that even when they said them the words seemed great: "Be still, and know that I am God."

Today we take this matter up where Arnold Bennett left

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it. We had better take it up. The modern world, with all its busyness and din, does need to know what those words mean.

At the beginning we may well guard ourselves against the suspicion that talk like this about being still and gaining knowledge may turn out to be sentimental, a merely mystical escape from a frank facing of intellectual questions. Of course, the fact is that nobody ever discovered profound knowledge without being still. A student of mine made a shrewd comment on this matter the other day. He said that altogether too much emphasis had been placed upon that apple whose fall revealed to Newton the law of gravitation, whereas the salient and decisive element in the discovery was not so much the apple as the garden—Newton was in a garden alone and still when he saw!

Let no one, then, endeavor to evade this truth on the ground that it sidesteps intellectual considerations. This truth applies to the intellectual as much as to the spiritual life. Can one suppose that Copernicus and Galileo achieved their amazing insight into the nature of the universe amid the din and confusion of a crowd or the chatter of superficial conversation? Upon the contrary, Wordsworth's phrase aptly describes their achievement: "the harvest of a quiet eye." All our knowledge of this vast new universe is that. The most epoch-making discovery of modern times, I suppose, is Darwin's—twenty years in his English garden, considering, reflecting, seeking tirelessly for insight, until from that garden gate one day he emerged with an amazing truth, "the harvest of a quiet eye."

* We are accustomed to say that this modern world is very noisy. So it is. Steamships and railroads, automobiles and airplanes are thunderously fabricated and run, but behind all this turmoil is a vast realm of silence. Every basic principle which lies behind and helps create the new machinery was discovered by some quiet eye. We had better not endeavor to escape this truth: Be still, and know.

Nevertheless, most of us are practically evading it. How hard it is to be still! The danger of this situation in the spiritual life lies in the fact that the finer and lovelier any-

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thing is the more it is hurt by confusion and noise. Some things can be snapped off with dispatch, done in haste, hammered out with noisy vigor, but the finest things are always lost to people who do not know how to be still.

Most of us know persons who cannot even sit down before a glorious scene in nature and be still. They must be always rustling about, doing something, chattering. They are like pools forever blown upon by restless winds, that never grow calm enough to reflect anything beautiful. Of course, such souls never can know nature. They lack what Wordsworth called

. . . that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude.

And we must all of us know people whose personal relationships are all awry because they cannot keep still. Here is a father, for example, with his son who, let us say, has just done something which at the first blush the father disapproves; so he thunders like Jupiter and whips out the lightnings. Why cannot that man be still at least long enough to let the youth state his case? It may be that what the boy did had some sound sense in it, some good intention. What if that father would keep still, enter into sympathetic understanding of the boy's point of view, talk it over quietly with him as a friend? It might be that the boy's mistake, even though very serious, could be so handled that father and son would be closer together all their lives. And now see what he has done with his noise! Homes are being ruined every day by tongues hung in the middle and wagging at both ends, and homes are being saved every day by people who know how to keep still.

We certainly must know people—and it would be strange if they were not often ourselves—whose religion is shallow and cheap, superficial, ineffective, no staying power in it, no depth to it, because the life knows no quietness. It is commonly said that the trouble with such people is that they lack faith, that they do not believe enough, but the chances are all in favor of another diagnosis. There is no great spiritual life without a quiet eye.

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Long before we start to analyze why this is so, we know that the Old Testament story concerning Elijah at the Mount of Horeb does symbolize an everlasting truth. "A great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood." There is no great spiritual life without that.

This truth is much too deep for preaching. It is obvious that the finer and lovelier a thing is, like the beauty of nature or intimate personal relationships or the religious life, the more it is hurt by noise, hurry, and confusion. But how shall a man put that into mere words or by language make clear the secret through which we can garner the harvest of a quiet eye?

For one thing, there is involved in this truth the whole matter of a man's ability to live with himself. Constantly in the pulpit we talk about the importance of relationships with other people, but anybody who, like a minister or a psychiatrist, deals intimately with individuals, knows how much less of a problem that would be if we only could get people into right relationships with themselves. Samuel Johnson said once that the great business of his life was to escape from himself. That is the chief business of many people's lives. They are always running away from themselves, refusing to sit down quietly with themselves, dreading the solitude where they have to talk with themselves, and so never getting to know themselves. And because our modern world is so full of machinery by which we can escape from ourselves, we seem for a time to make a go of it. Automobiles, newspapers, radio—anybody can keep from being still and so never have to come to terms with himself.

Did I say 'never'? How much simpler the problem would be if that were really true! The fateful hour inevitably strikes when we must come to terms with ourselves. For see how this

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endless endeavor to run away from ourselves leads out into lives all cluttered up with change and busyness and din, with no deep and quiet meaning in them, until the day comes at last when a man can no longer avoid seeing how utterly dreary life is without meaning—a riverbed with no river in it, an existence with no purpose through it, a body without a soul. You do not believe in hell? How can you avoid seeing the hell inside these people who have spent all their days restlessly running away from themselves only to discover that their life has no deep and quiet meaning. Our principle does tally with our experience, does it not?

Newton never would have discovered the law of gravitation if he had lived the dispersed and noisy life that we live, and if we say that that is of no account to us because the discovery of gravitation is not our business, I call your attention to something that is our business, most intimately our business, so much our business that if we make millions of dollars and miss it, the money will not be enough to keep the thought of suicide from being attractive to some of us. There is no business so deeply ours as the achievement of a rich spirit that will put meaning into life, undergird it with sustaining philosophy, organize it around high purposes, make it radiant, give it power to understand, at least a little, how it was that Jesus, facing the cross, could say, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The danger which we face at this point is that we should begin to excuse ourselves because this modern world in which we live is so noisy. To be sure it is. One can sometimes tell how important an element is in man's experience by noting the number of synonyms necessary to express it: noise, clamor, clatter, bang, roar, rattle, racket, blare, din, hubbub, jangle, outcry, uproar, tumult—it takes a whole battery of words to sum up this aspect of man's life. But note this: those are old words. They were in the vocabulary before our day. I suspect it never has been easy to be still. Any student of primitive sociology would tell us that probably in our

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New York homes we have more opportunity for privacy than primitive savages know.

No, my friends, the trouble is not outside, it is inside. We moderns have forgotten the uses of solitude and have lost our faith in prayer. I know all the reasons for discarding some old ideas of prayer, and you will not suspect me of being a conservative about that, but, in its essential meaning, is not prayer this: to "be still, and know that I am God"? If a man believes in God at all, if above his life there is any goodness or truth or beauty that deserves to be called divine, such prayer should be his.

You see, it is true—our lives are like brooks. When they babble they are shallow. When they are deep they are still. That is prayer—to run deep and still.

Some one here may be rising in protest against all this. He is thinking of the world outside and of the social problems there. He is saying, What is the good of talking about this inner silence? We need to work, to gird ourselves and work! Yes, but we could do so much better work if we had inside us spirits resilient and strong, integrated, purposeful, and powerful. You never will cure outer confusion with inward confusion. Never! There have been times when we did grow quiet and listen. Some of us never would have been Christians at all—God knows what we might have been and done—if in our thinking there had not come a call divine so that we grew still and listened. Like the youthful Samuel in the temple, we said, "Speak; for thy servant heareth," and since then there have been hours when that call came again and we grew still. I call you to witness they are the crucial experiences of the spiritual life. I call you to witness that out of them great consequences come. To encourage such hours, to seek them, to understand what all the saints have known, that prayer is not so much talking as listening—as the psalmist said, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak"—creates a depth and quality of character which nothing else produces. Give me such men and women for my friends. As Mrs. Frances Shaw sings:

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Who loves the rain
And loves his home,
And looks on life with quiet eyes,
Him will I follow through the storm;
And at his hearth-fire keep me warm;
Nor hell nor heaven shall that soul surprise,
Who loves the rain,
And loves his home,
And looks on life with quiet eyes.

In the second place, there is involved in this truth not simply our ability to live with ourselves but the whole matter of our spiritual insight and, in particular, our reverence. How constantly we meet two contrasting types of religious people! On the one side is the creedalist, the cocksure, blatant, sometimes militant dogmatist who has summed up the universe and the God of it in a formula. He is sure. Frankly, such a man does sometimes seem to me to have turned the ancient psalm upside down and inside out and to be saying it to God himself, instead of, like the psalmist, humbly hearing God say it to him—"O Lord, I have searched thee and known thee. I compass thy path and thy lying down, and am acquainted with all thy ways. For there is not a word in thy tongue, but, lo, O Lord, I know it altogether. I have beset thee behind and before, and laid my hand upon thee."

From such an irreverent and dogmatic inversion of all great religion, with what relief one turns to another kind of spirit, even though it be in a man who will not repeat our special religious shibboleths—Mr. Einstein, for example:

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed. This insight into the mystery of life, coupled though it be with fear, has also given rise to religion. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong in the ranks of devoutly religious men.

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Well, if you had to choose between dogmatism on the one side and that spirit on the other, is there any doubt which you would want? And whenever one stands in the presence of one so reverent, he knows that that man has a quiet eye. The real cause of our modern materialism in theory and practise is not the cogency of materialistic argument but the superficiality of a noisy life. Anybody can be a materialist. It is the easiest, cheapest thing in the world to be a materialist. Materialism is the first snapshot that anybody takes of the way life looks when one has no time to go back behind what life looks like to what it is, when he is too busy, as Einstein says, "to wonder and stand rapt in awe." So religion languishes and materialism triumphs, not because of the strength of materialistic argument but because our footsteps are so noisy that they cannot follow the seers, who never were materialists and who knew how to keep still.

Step for a moment outside the realm of religion and see if this is true there also. Who was it called Shakespeare the circumnavigator of the human soul? I read him again this last summer—no modern novelist half so thrilling in his insights into human nature. Now, it is an amazing thing that Shakespeare could be so timely. Everything that a man like Harry Elmer Barnes says against Jesus, that he is old-fashioned and uses ways of thinking that are obsolete, can be said with equal truth about Shakespeare. Shakespeare's astronomy was the old Ptolemaic system with its cozy, compact universe. Shakespeare's plays are full of astrology. Shakespeare's world was filled with demons. He seemed to believe in witchcraft and he certainly believed in ghosts. Out with him! these anti-Christian critics would say if they were consistent. But when one sits down quietly with Shakespeare, one sees why he lasts. One finds in him the sins and shames and humors of mankind. Our loves, our hopes, our griefs, and our limitations are there. Each of us is there with all his moods. He was the circumnavigator of the human soul, and it must be obvious that such deep seeing would be impossible without a quiet eye.

The real enemy of our religious life is not atheism but

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practical secularism, and secularism means excessive busyness with things, aggressive commerce with the visible. Now, in the realm of things we had better be aggressive, put our backs into it, learn swiftness of decision and energy of action. That is the secular technique and it does fit *things*. But in religion we deal with invisible *values*—the love of goodness, the love of beauty, the love of truth, the love of God. Nobody in that realm ever yet learned anything by aggressiveness alone. That garden has but a single gate. A man must first of all be still.

To be sure, he may come out afterward and apply what he has seen to the world's needs with all the aggressiveness of a militant soul. But if in the first place he is going to see, he must be still. Is some one here saying that what the world needs most is hard, dedicated work? Yes, but look at Jesus. The scholars say his public ministry lasted only about a year and a half. That is all the time he had. Look what he did in it! He turned the world upside down and he has hardly started yet. But behind that amazing life of concentrated activity and incalculable influence, feel the quiet! Thirty years at Nazareth, quiet. Throughout his ministry on mountaintop and by the sea, quiet. And when at last the climax came and the cross was to be borne, the problem of the cross was settled in Jesus' mind in a garden before he faced it. Once more in spiritual life a magnificent consequence came out of a garden, where the soul knew how to use solitude and silence.

*The Power of a Great
Tradition*

IN SPITE of the fact that our generation everywhere challenges us to dare new things, be forward-looking, progressive, venturesome, I speak to you this morning, not about something new but about something old, and plead with you, not on behalf of adventure but on behalf of tradition.

Let us at the start set the case in a clear light by remembering the stout answer which Naboth gave to the acquisitive greed of King Ahab. Ahab wanted Naboth's vineyard. He needed it to complete the summer estate he was building where a great spring poured out to make a spot of beauty on the southern edge of the Plain of Esdraelon. A Zionist colony clusters about that fruitful place today and to the imagination of one who has been there the centuries become transparent and one understands why Ahab wanted Naboth's land. But Naboth was resolute in refusal: "The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

Even before we analyze the matter we feel assured that such a refusal has a place somewhere in human life and that a character who does not understand it, who never has answered any Ahab with so resounding a reply, is probably shallow. To be sure, if one insists that such an attitude is dangerous, that it has been misused times without number, that every obscurantist idea and oppressive institution has at some time found refuge in it, we agree. The appeal to tradition is dangerous because it is so powerful and can be so influentially misused. Anything in this world that can get itself thought of as the inheritance of our fathers, and so gain sacredness and become the object of sentimental loyalty, achieves thereby an amazingly resistant power against change. So throughout history social systems that ought to have been given up, economic ideas grown obsolete, religious

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conceptions sinning against light and opportunity, things that Jesus would have rejected as the tradition of the elders, have retreated to this last defense of the indefensible. They were the inheritance of our fathers, men said, and should not be surrendered. If the old exclamation is justified, "Oh Liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name!" the same is justified about tradition. Tradition has a long criminal record, so that progressive and forward-looking minds always have been, and rightly are, suspicious of it.

This is the kind of thing we modernists are saying all the time; this morning, therefore, I plan to say something different. For something different needs to be said to balance the truth. After all, take a careful look at King Ahab, one of the most acquisitive go-getters of his time, extending his economic alliances by marriage and getting riches faster than any king of Israel had ever gotten them before, so that his palaces were a wonder to see and his ivory house, which by the way was uncovered some time ago in Samaria, was headline news in the gossip of the time. Look, I say, at this acquisitive king and his still more acquisitive queen, both of them out to show the world how up-to-date Israelitish monarchs could be, and then look at Naboth, courageous, stubborn Naboth, standing calmly athwart their path with grim refusal: "The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

One knows that however dangerous the misuses of that attitude may be, the right use of it is indispensable and may even sometimes be magnificent. Indeed, is it unfair to suggest that the kind of generation we are living in particularly needs Naboth? I do not mean that our generation should face or move backward. Far from that, we are under impelling necessity of moving forward. In international, economic, ecclesiastical, domestic life, willy-nilly we are forced to find new solutions for new problems so that, if in his day Lowell could say that it would not do to try the future's portal with the past's blood-rusted key, that is truer yet today, and in consequence we live in one of the most upset and restless eras in

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history, a time of rapid change and of easy-going surrender of old ways.

When under such circumstances a man faces a reactionary mind, he has to say, Turn around; stop looking backward; look forward; the preservative attitude is useless and it disqualifies a man from serviceable living. But, my friends, the number of reactionary minds in a company like this is negligible. The better I know you, the more I see that you are not typically preservative and reactionary at all. But one does see something else here, rising out of the vicissitude of this changeable time, a mood vaguely felt even when not clearly thought, that what is new is probably true and what is old is likely to be obsolete, a mood tempted to surrender to almost any Ahab that comes along some old conviction or principle of conduct. In consequence, one sees here men and women giving up things which ought not to be given up, which sometime they will wish they had back again. I know well I am talking to the conscience of some one here when I say that in a time like this there is need of Naboth, clear-sighted, level-headed, stubborn Naboth, not going to give up things he knows he will want again, facing the easy surrender of his generation with stout refusal: God forbid!

In order to prevent this from appearing as a mere appeal to sentiment, let us throw some sound and solid history around Naboth and Elijah, who supported him, and the succeeding prophets who joined the great tradition.

We commonly think of the Hebrew prophets as progressives. We say that they were forward-looking men, blazing the trail of new moral ideals, and that it was the reactionaries who withstood them. In the large, that is a possible interpretation of the prophets, but they would have been astonished to have been told it. They never thought they were progressives; they thought they were conservatives. They were not consciously trying to gain something new; they consciously were trying to save a great tradition from going to pieces. Consider the illuminating explanation of this fact. The Hebrew people through long years had lived as nomads in the desert. Any one who has lived in the desert even for a little

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time, as I have, understands how severe a social discipline it is. Day and night the nomads face the niggardliness and penury of nature. There is barely enough to go around. The bread they eat and the water they drink must be shared. Each must be for all and all for each. It is no accident that some of the finest ideals of social justice and brotherhood in history have come from the desert. There a rough equality obtains. The contrast between very rich and very poor does not exist. It never can be well with any unless it is well with all. There naturally they take from each according to his ability and give to each according to his need. So a rough, tribal democracy exists and a strong tradition of social justice.

It was this strong tradition which stood up and spoke in Naboth. He hated the new commercialism of Ahab, the breakdown of brotherhood, the rise of social inequality, the assumed right to make a man give up his land. So Naboth and Elijah, who supported him, rose in protest. They thought they were conservatives, standing for a great tradition; we say they were progressives; and on that hangs a large matter. There never has been any real progress without real conservatism. If a generation lets any Ahab of brilliant and external change monopolize the stage and walk off with the play, it is going not forward but backward. Strange paradox though it is, progress always has lain and lies still with Naboth. He was no longer a nomad; he was an agriculturist; he had accepted radical changes, personal and social, in the structure of his living; he was no preservative reactionary. But when it came to the great tradition of his people, democracy, brotherhood, social justice, he was a stubborn loyalist—"The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

Not a person in this audience, I suspect, can honestly say that he has no need of Naboth somewhere in his life. At any rate, let us run out a few lines of exploration and see if we cannot perceive Ahab still trying to persuade Naboth to give up his vineyard.

For one thing, many people are surrendering the old-fash-

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ioned fidelities of family life. On this point my radio mail is revealing, especially in letters whose general effect is like this:

Is it true that old-fashioned family life must be given up? We ourselves have always had a beautiful home. We have loved each other and the children and it never has occurred to us to want to love anybody else in the same way at all. But now our friends are telling us that this attitude is obsolete, that we ought to be engaged in outside liaisons, that Bertrand and Dora Russell have given the final quietus to old ideas of marital fidelity and, what is more, that every up-to-date person is thinking the same thing. It seems to us that our surrender would sacrifice some valuable things which some day we might wish to have back again, and, especially, that it would sacrifice some things very valuable indeed to the children, but we are greatly disturbed and upset by all this new talk. What do you think?

You know what I think: Ahab all over again saying to Naboth, "Give me thy vineyard." The real facts in this situation seem to some of us quite unmistakable. In its long history mankind has tried every conceivable experiment with the sex relationship—polyandry, polygamy, monogamy, promiscuity, wives and concubines, prostitution. Can you think of any basically new arrangement to be tried? And out of this long experimenting of the race there has arisen, so it seems to us, the great tradition: a man and a woman loving each other so much that they do not care to love anybody else in the same way at all, and so building a permanent home that puts around the children the strong security of an unbroken affection. That describes the loveliest family life in the world. That is the great tradition. Go back in history as far as you like, and wherever you find anything remotely like that you know it is beautiful. Come to the wedding days of your children, and you know that is your prayer for them. That alone is the great tradition.

If somebody says that this is often difficult to achieve, we agree. Do you know any great tradition in any realm that is not difficult to live up to? In a company as numerous as this there are sure to be broken homes. I am not sitting in

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judgment. Only God and your own consciences know the situation that you faced. You are right about this: the great tradition is high and difficult. If some one says further that we have made a grievous mistake in supposing that we could enforce the great tradition by law, as though, by making divorce legally hard, we assured the success of monogamy, of course we agree. Sensible ministers sometimes have to recommend divorce, and if there is any place where our laws are hypocritical and need reformation, it is here.

Nevertheless, when all excuses and explanations possible have been offered, in the long run the quality of character in this nation depends upon the great tradition. There is no substitute in the training of children for parents who love each other. No modern Ahab by any magic can devise a substitute for the great tradition of the faithful family. Throw that away and some day we will be desperately needing it again.

Moreover, there is no possibility of keeping Christianity without the great tradition of the home. When some of us call God 'Father,' or try to imagine what human brotherhood might be, the very words are weighted with significance. When we watch Jesus treating every personality as sacred, we know where he got that attitude—in a beautiful family, the only place in this world yet where the central idea of Christianity is perfectly fulfilled. Every personality infinitely valuable—that, like every other idea of Jesus, came straight out of the family. We never can keep Christianity without the great tradition.

If some family here this morning is facing Ahab, if some young people are living lives that will inevitably make Ahab invincible when he appears, I wish I could persuasively bring up over the horizon of your imaginations the figure of Naboth. How some of us need him! Progress, you say, new ways for new days, and all that. I tell you, by no hook or crook can we ever make one step of real progress in this country if we give up the great tradition of the home. The Lord forbid that we should give up the inheritance of our fathers!

Again, how many people today are easily surrendering

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basic moral convictions! It is desperately easy, in times like this, to grow morally cynical. "What is honour?" said Falstaff; "a word What is that honour? air." Watching the strains under which men collapse today and the lamentable breakdowns in character that vex our private and public life in consequence, one sees how often Ahab does persuade us to give up our vineyards.

Take it from a modernist, as perhaps you might not be willing to take it from anybody else, that the most precious moral possessions of the race are its great traditions. If at first you are tempted to disbelieve that, at least for a moment consider the evidence.

If we were in a wreck at sea, why would the women and children go first into the lifeboats, and why would you and I—mere landsmen though we are—at once consent and vigorously repress all opposing instincts of self-preservation? Because it is the tradition of the sea. You and I could not trust ourselves in a crisis to extemporize conduct like that. The pressure must be very great. But we do not have to extemporize such conduct. We are sustained and impelled by a great tradition. They say that, when the Titanic sank, Captain Smith compressed everything he had to say to his crew into two words. He had no time to make a speech and happily no speech was needed. "Be British" was quite enough. Ten centuries of a great tradition on the sea went into that.

Do you then understand, at least a little, what is meant when we say that the most precious moral possessions of the race are its great traditions?

This last week a nine-year-old boy and his eleven-year-old sister fell through the ice, near their village in Massachusetts, and were in danger of drowning. The rescuer, who leaped in, was unable to handle both of them and he reports that the boy said to him, "Never mind me, save Annette." So he did that; he saved Annette and the boy drowned. Without knowing the family, I venture with confidence to do some guessing. Even though that boy was only nine years old, he had already been introduced to the great tradition. He had been told heroic stories by his father or mother, or at the church

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or school. He knew what the best breed of the race do when they are caught in a tight place. It was not that he thought of the great tradition at the time, but it had sunk in. Something greater than that boy, something very old and fine spoke in his words: "Never mind me, save Annette."

Will you then say to yourself what I honestly say to myself? I know myself too well to trust myself, alone by myself, on many matters. I am thankful I do not have to extemporize conduct in crises that call for basic qualities of character, like courage, self-sacrifice, decency. It might go very hard with me at times to decide right. But, you see, a man does not have to decide right. There are some things that a man who has been bred in the great tradition cannot do. No, they cannot be done. It is not simply the man himself but something greater and older than the man which determines the issue—his most precious possession and his strongest safeguard, the great tradition.

Of course, I am thinking of some one here this morning facing Ahab. You know what he is asking you to give up. Somewhere or other among these pews some one is tempted to do a deed that would deny the great tradition. Somewhere or other among these pews Naboth is needed: "The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

Once more, many are tempted to give up the Christian tradition of faith and life. Now, it is precisely in a realm like religion that the words 'tradition' and 'traditional' acquire their most evil and sinister significance. For that reason a sermon like this is better preached by a modernist than by a traditionalist. A man is not fully qualified to make a plea for the Christian tradition of faith and life until he has deeply feared traditionalism and has rebelled against it.

Listen, then, to an anti-traditionalist's plea for tradition. The only place in this world where we have opportunity to make a permanent contribution to human life is in some great tradition. Medicine, for example. Long ago it started, and its slow increment across the centuries has been won by tireless, patient effort. Kings and queens have come and gone,

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empires risen and fallen, economic systems have had their dawn and setting, but still the great tradition of healing flows on and will flow on and, if in any generation a man makes a contribution to it, he has made a permanent investment which will be here as long as humanity endures.

Or the tradition of English letters. What a story that is from the crude, rough speech of our early forebears, through Chaucer on! How rich the language has grown! How variously its possibilities have been revealed! What unexpected power emerged when a Milton or a Shakespeare spoke! What unforeseen loveliness appeared when came a Shelley or a Keats! It is a great tradition and it flows on and on. Whoso makes a contribution to it has made a permanent investment. Whoso loves it loves something that will be here till time shall end.

Or the tradition of liberty and democracy. It started long ago, as we have said, in the desert. Many a time it has flowed underground like a lost river; it has emerged in the great souls of the prophets, and through cascades and rapids with never-diminishing current, sometimes rising to a mighty flood, it has flowed on. Today, when tremendous obstacles withstand it, it will not perish. It will change its forms to meet new days but its essential meaning will go on. There are millions of us left yet—mark it!—to say, “The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.”

Such traditions do not enslave us; they liberate, release, enrich us. The only place in this world where a man can make a permanent investment is in a great tradition.

Consider, then, what some of us mean by the Christian tradition. We are not thinking of final forms of church or creed that might enslave us. The Christian tradition is as fluid as a river. Yes, and as strong and as everlasting. It started long ago in a Spirit in Galilee; it has sprung up in beauty countless times in lives inspired by him; it has accumulated meaning, clothed itself in living, gathered to its expression the music, art, philosophy of the passing cen-

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turies; and to us, who have been born in it, it is our most precious possession and our deepest inspiration.

How strong a thing such a spiritual tradition can be! In Germany thousands of pastors stand out against the Nazi domination of the church. Socialism in Germany fell flat before Hitler. Organized labor in Germany went down before Hitler. No other institutional voice has dared to lift itself against Nazi policies except the church. Now thousands of pastors stand up. What do you think has been the secret of decision in many a pastor's heart as he fought out with himself what he had to do? I think I know. They are Lutherans. Their tradition goes back to a man who once confronted an emperor and then said of his action, "Here I stand, I can do no other: God help me. Amen." Very noble and very powerful can be a great tradition.

So the Christian tradition is our mother. Out of her long travail our very souls were born. All that is finest and deepest in us came from her. The Christian tradition does not enslave us; it releases and enriches us! The Christian tradition is not dying. It will outwear and outlast every form of political and economic institution that we know today.

O where are kings and empires now
Of old that went and came?

Moreover, and more important, the Christian tradition will outlast its own forms of belief and organization. It is a great movement of thought and life and it flows on. He who contributes to it makes a permanent investment. He who loves it loves a faith about life and a spirit in living life that will be here till the end of time and beyond. O Ahab, the Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

What Are You Standing For?

OUR morning's thought concerns one of the most significant aspects of human life: our representative capacity. We all have in us the power to stand for something, and the way we use it determines, as hardly anything else does, our personal quality.

In the first chapter of the book of The Acts, for example, Jesus is reported to have said to his disciples, "Ye shall be my witnesses." He is making, that is, a direct and definite appeal to their representative capacity, as though to say, You can be more than yourselves; you have the power to stand for high principles and worthy enterprises in your generation; hardly any element in you is more influential than this power so to identify yourself with something greater than yourself that when people think of you they think of that; I want that representative capacity on my side; you shall be my witnesses.

As we turn to consider the application of this matter to our personal lives, note two or three facts which underlie our truth.

In the first place, we all do possess this representative capacity. A new-born babe is a baby only, but even in the early years of developing personality the child begins to accumulate suggestiveness. A young child soon achieves interests and ambitions so distinctive that whenever you think of the child you think of them. And when the man is grown and such interests are confirmed, he has identified himself with what he stands for, so that Galileo and astronomy, St. Francis of Assisi and saintliness, Napoleon and militarism, Captain Kidd and piracy, Florence Nightingale and nursing, are done up in one bundle of thought. A man does have this mysterious power to accumulate personal suggestiveness, so that when we think of him we think of that.

Charles Dickens has been often laughed at for the exag-

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gerated way in which he used this fact in the depicting of his characters. How many of Dickens' people are simply lay figures for some mannerism or personal quality! Micawber stands for waiting for something to turn up, Scrooge for churlishness, Squeers for cruelty, Uriah Heap for mock humility. In all this, to be sure, Dickens did exaggerate but there is truth in it. Think of the people whom you personally know and see how ~~inevitably~~ they have achieved personal suggestiveness so that when you think of them you think of what they stand for. What, then, do we remind people of when they think of us?

Under our morning's truth a second fact lies, that the right use of this representative capacity is man's glory. This is the only thing about war that by the wildest stretch of imagination I can conceive as good. War is irremediably evil and yet one experience associated with it we never should forget. Multitudes of men, living monotonous lives, absorbed in answering physical needs for food and shelter, never having known the thrill of a consuming loyalty, heard the national cause saying, Be my witness; stand for me; it may cost you the ultimate self-sacrifice, but the need is great. Multitudes of men, answering that appeal, felt like ciphers that had had numerals put in front of them. They achieved value; they were lifted into self-respect; at last, after many years, they were really standing for something. Remembering the gruesome slaughter of the war and the disillusionment of its futile aftermath, let us never forget this revelation we had of the amazing power of men's representative capacity when it is once aroused. We never can tell when the most unlikely man may find his cause, identify himself with it, and by it be lifted to a greatness that will make us ashamed.

One of our American schoolmasters has told us about two young college men whom he personally knew, who went to a moving-picture theater one afternoon. The film was a salacious one, as its advertising made clear. They could have planned their time to better purpose. That afternoon a fire broke out in the theater and the young men, sitting near a fire escape, could have stepped to safety on it. Looking back,

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however, they saw what was going on inside the theater. A riot had broken out, women and children were being trampled, and a tragedy was inevitable on that fire escape unless something was done immediately. So the youths deliberately stood on each side of the door, held back the struggling crowd, handed women and children to safety, until one of them was pushed off the landing by the mob and the other caught fire from the encompassing flames. "Don't cry," he said to his mother before his death three days later; "I have no regrets. . . . I think I was the last to leave the theater alive." Strange duality in human nature! Think what they went for. Think, then, what they did.

So it is with the lowest of us—much, to be sure, that is deplorable in us and yet, on the other side, the capacity, when the right call comes, to identify ourselves even with so high and difficult a cause as vicarious sacrifice and find in that our glory! For the real worth of a man is not in himself alone; it is in what he comes to stand for.

Under our morning's truth there lies a third fact, that the least of us can stand for the greatest things. It is not difficult to see the operation of our principle in those capacious personalities that have bestridden the world. One sees it plainly, for example, in a character like Lincoln. Abstract from Lincoln the things he came to stand for and we have a queer remainder. For Lincoln, taken by himself, was unprepossessing and ungainly, came from lowly origins and small opportunities, had no superficial graces that cover inward lack. Rather, like a very plain wire grown incandescent, Lincoln shone with what he came to stand for. He achieved a personal suggestiveness that is one of the marvels of our history. Think of him and see how inevitably you are reminded of magnanimity, patience, steadfastness under strain, devotion to the nation's unity, love of liberty, deepening faith, and spiritual life! He came to stand for those things which man must love or else perish. And so, plain man though he was, he achieved an undying name.

In such capacious personalities it is not difficult to see the operation of this principle, but the more important thing for

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most of us to see is that the least of us can stand for the greatest things. Water is indispensable; the whole earth's fertility depends upon it, but its representatives differ widely in magnitude. Not the ocean only, fruitful mother of all moisture, nor the Great Lakes, nor continental rivers, but every rill, every mountain stream, every wayside spring, every drop of rain must represent that indispensable necessity. So the smallest of us can stand for the greatest things.

Honesty is indispensable. It is needed in high places, as one must see who looks upon the crying shame of our municipal governments. In any schoolroom, however, any child, refusing to cheat in an examination, can stand for that indispensable quality. Unselfishness is indispensable, and in personalities like Father Damien, immolating himself among the lepers, the man, as Stevenson said, who "shut to with his own hand the doors of his own sepulchre," it is famously exhibited. But in any home, in everyday, commonplace relationships we can see that indispensable quality, as a wayside spring might stand for the same cause the ocean represents.

This challenge no one of us can evade. The smallest of us can stand for the greatest things. A lantern can represent the same cause of light that the sun stands for, and in its corner of the world a lantern can often do what the sun could never do. So no one of us can escape the question: What are we standing for?

If our truth is so deeply imbedded in the soil of human nature, let us turn to two special applications of it in our human relationships.

In the first place, in this confused and turbulent generation, what are we standing for in our moral loyalties? There are two kinds of great men. Some by the sheer brilliance of their intellectual genius are lifted to the heights, but others, much less highly endowed, find greatness in another way. They perceive in their generation the real movements of thought and life to which the future belongs, identify themselves with them and stand for them. The first kind of greatness, individual brilliance, is the gift of destiny to a

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very few. The second kind of greatness, identifying oneself with the real movements of one's time, is open to us all.

To be sure, it is not easy to achieve the insight to know what the significant movements of one's time really are. About 1400, Tamerlane, the Tartar emperor, swept across Asia in campaigns of conquest which for ruthless slaughter and practical success have few parallels in history. Naturally, he filled the public eye; he caught the public ear. The multitudes thought that he was the great event of the time. About 1400, however, a boy was born in Mainz, Germany, who soon would be experimenting with and then using movable type on a rude printing press, and that lad, Gutenberg, had in his hands more power over the future of humanity than many Tamerlanes. So it is difficult to achieve the insight to see what the real movements of our day are, but blessed are the men and women who achieve it and who come to be what Emerson called "representative men."

In saying this I am not sure whether I am thinking more about the progress of good causes in the world or about the welfare of individuals, who never will achieve health and happiness until they find something outside themselves to stand for. For while on the one side it is true that if a cause is to have success it must have witnesses who will speak up for it and be devoted to it, on the other side it is true that no individual soul can ever find life worth living until he has discovered a cause for which to stand.

One feels that especially now when so many thousands of our people, well-educated, well-to-do, are flocking to the psychiatrists to have their dislocated and emotionally upset personalities put together again. What with complexes, inhibitions, repressions, suppressions, and neuroses, not to say psychoses, with men and women, especially women, flocking to the psychoanalysts to tell all that ever they have done and much that they never did at all, one can readily understand the saying, "Whoso among you is without insanity, let him think the first think."

Now, I am sure that this new psychiatry is making and is going to make an incalculable contribution to human hap-

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piness. But there are multitudes of people who never would need to go to a psychiatrist if, in the first place, they would achieve a little healthy-minded objectivity about living, discover in this amazing generation a few things to be interested in, identify themselves with something greater than themselves and stand for it. To be carried out of yourself by something that you serve, so that you forget yourself in something other than yourself and so enlarge yourself—that is the secret of a healthy and a happy life.

There must be some here who ought to be ashamed of themselves. So often these dislocated and emotionally upset people are not the poor, the really hard-bested, but the softly situated, the comfortably circumstanced, the selfish, the ingrowing, parasitic minds who never have found anything outside themselves that took their thoughts off themselves.

Over against such pathological egoism put another sort of character altogether, Thomas Bridges. An unwanted babe, he was found by a riverside. They picked him up at a bridge; that is why they called him Bridges. They discovered him on St. Thomas' Day; that is why they called him Thomas. He did not have a chance. But for all that, Thomas Bridges found the secret of a healthy and a happy life—something to stand for. He picked out about the hardest thing that could be found to do—working with the aborigines of Tierra del Fuego, at the desolate southern end of the Western Hemisphere. Even Charles Darwin paid tribute to his work. For Darwin turned up in that forlorn locality on his famous scientific voyage on the steamship *Beagle*, and afterwards sent a financial contribution, saying in effect that at first he had seen little use in missions among the aborigines but now, having learned of the transformation wrought at Tierra del Fuego, he was glad to have a hand in it.

Do you, then, pity Bridges in Tierra del Fuego? Spare your pity for those who need it, the well-educated, well-to-do, parasitic, uninterested people who never have found anything to take them out of themselves. After all, a man like

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Bridges does find the secret of health and happiness—something worth while standing for.

Could there ever have been a generation with more worthwhile things to stand for than today? To be sure, one need not head in toward Tierra del Fuego or enterprise any public or picturesque adventure like it. I have a friend who is facing death, not an easy death either—two operations already past and now the recurrent trouble inoperable. All the doctors agree six months will finish the matter. Six months more and she must say good-bye to a husband who adores her and lovely children who need her. But she is one of the most radiant and triumphant spirits I have met in many a year. She is standing for something—the power of a deep religious faith to create a victorious life in a difficult situation. As the New Testament says about Jesus, death hath no dominion over her.

Any way you look at life, what magnificent things there are to stand for, to remind people of when they think of you!

Especially if one is well and strong, young and able, what things there are to stand for! There is honesty—plain, everyday, ordinary honesty—in business and in politics. There is decency in private morals. There is a better economic system, more beneficial for all the people. There are international causes like the World Court. What things there are to stand for!

Let one say this in particular about New York City. One hears, till one is weary, about the temptations of New York. I celebrate them. With joy I celebrate the temptations of New York: temptations to music, to art, to social service, to the support of interracial goodwill and international concord. Here where the currents of the world flow through, how can men and women live thinking only of temptations downward when there are so many alluring temptations upward?

Well, what are we standing for? What do people think of when they think of us?

The second application is no less important. What are we standing for in religion? I know well what some young men and women here are tempted to feel in this regard. They are

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tempted to be rebellious about religion. In particular, they are tempted to be in revolt against the church, and so they are not standing for much of anything in this great realm, recognized as the source of their deepest inspiration by the early saints, and as a social necessity by such modern radicals as Havelock Ellis, who says, "People without religion are always dangerous."

Let me talk to you for a moment as an individual. You are in revolt against the narrow, cramping, trivial ideas and attitudes in religion which you have often heard expressed, and in that you are right. In a generation such as this, with weighty matters afoot, when you read in the papers of religious men in controversy about apostolic succession, as though the tactual laying on of bishops' hands across the centuries could somehow validate a Christian ministry, you can hardly restrain your impatience with such credulous belief in ecclesiastical magic. Or when, in a time like this, when education has gotten so far afield, you hear men still appealing to Genesis against evolution, or in this law-abiding world trying to run their minds into the molds of ancient miracle narratives as though our spiritual life were somehow dependent on credence in old miracles, belief in the like of which in our day would justify an alienist's examination, you are up in mental arms against it. And when, in a generation like this with real causes afoot, you see people bothered over trivial sectarian affairs, it makes you almost ill.

But, my friends, do you not see that there are two ways in which these old, trivial, petty religious attitudes can ruin you? First, if you try to accept them and believe them yourself, that will ruin you. But second, if you let them negatively determine your religious thinking and hold them so in the forefront of your mind that you are always fighting them, hating them, revolting against them, that will ruin you too. Forget them! The real questions of religious faith and spiritual life today are not related to them. The fundamentalist-modernist controversy is now no better than kicking a dead lion. The real questions of religious faith and spiritual life are out ahead where scientists like Jeans and Eddington, or philoso-

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phers like Whitehead, Hocking, and Montague, or great issues about Christianizing the economic and international order, are putting them. To accept this new world of ours with its new knowledge and its fresh situations but still to keep spiritual life high, beautiful, effective, and creative—that is the real problem.

What, then, are we standing for in religion? For myself, I shall try to stand for Jesus Christ as the interpreter of spiritual life. In this world with its cynicism, its disillusionment, often its disheartenment, how men and women are needed to stand for him with the intellectual, personal, and social implications of his gospel! And it is going to be serious business standing for him in this generation.

It is said that a man once came to Whistler, the artist, and asked his help in hanging a new and beautiful picture. The man complained that he could not make the picture fit the room and Whistler, looking over the matter, said, "Man, you're beginning at the wrong end. You can't make that painting fit the room. You will have to make the room fit the painting." So when we carry into this modern world the picture of spiritual life that Jesus Christ brought, we cannot make it fit the room. Put it over against our private morals, our disintegrating family life, our economic system, our international order, and it will not fit the room. We must change the room to fit the picture. That is serious business. Will you stand for it?

If a man does stand for that, he makes a contribution to the world's life of a quality impossible if he stands for anything beside. For, after all, we men and women are much like flagstaffs. Some flagstaffs are very tall and prominent and some are small, but the glory of a flagstaff is not its size but the colors that it flies. A very small flagstaff flying the right colors is far more valuable than a very tall one with the wrong flag. When a man is altogether done with life, I should suppose that the most satisfying thing would be the ability to say, I am ashamed that I was not a better, taller, straighter flagstaff, but I am not ashamed of the colors that I flew.

The Christian Interpretation of Life
—*A Terrific Fact*

THE difficulty which many people experience in believing the Christian interpretation of life is not that they think it theoretically incredible but find it impossibly ideal. It seems to them a romanticizing of life's hard facts, lovely poetry but not sober prose.

Sometime ago there came to this country the woman who, as a little child, had been the original of Alice in Wonderland. Now, many people, seeing this plain, kindly woman, and suspecting that she must have been a plain, kindly child, marveled afresh that a poetic mind could so wave over an ordinary girl a magic wand as to create out of her the immortal fantasy of Alice. Christian faith often seems to be doing a similar thing to the plain facts of life; it romanticizes them, so that some of us all the time and all of us some of the time suspect that when behind the Christian interpretation of life we get at the facts, it is much like finding behind Alice in Wonderland a very ordinary girl.

Such a suspicion is accentuated in a time like this. We leave the world, where we have been living through another week, chaotic, tragic, antagonistic, and, passing through these sanctuary doors into this place of peace, we feel the contrast between the brutal facts we all must face in human suffering so deep that our plummets cannot measure it and, on the other side, our Christian faith about God's goodness, about love as a law of life, about all things working together for good to them that love God, about the meek inheriting the earth. Every Sunday there must be people here who, whether rebelliously or wistfully, feel that while this faith is beautiful it is poetry, fantasy not fact, and that all the preachers in their pulpits are Lewis Carroll over again, waving their wands of magic to make out of plain commonplaces Alice in Wonderland.

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To be sure, there are types of Christianity which make fantasy out of fact, but if I thought that were the preacher's essential business and Christianity's essential meaning, I would resign. For lovely as it is in literature so to use the gifts of fancy, in religion we starve without a solid fare of fact. Especially in times like this we cannot steady our nerve or nourish our souls on faith in Wonderland.

So today I share with you my conviction that this present crisis is not showing up the Christian interpretation of life, at its best, as fantastic and illusory but, on the contrary, is revealing it as fact, terrific fact, against which the mad unreason and selfish greed of the world having now run headlong, we are shaken and undone. The Christian interpretation of life, at its best, Alice in Wonderland? Listen to one central element in that interpretation: We are one body, and severally members one of another . . . the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee, or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

I take that famous figure from the twelfth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians as containing the kernel of the Christian ethic. Those very elements which many think fantastic and idealistic are there. The law of love is there because, if we are members of one body, we must care for one another. The law of ministering to the lowliest and the least is there because, in a body where we are members one of another, we must despise none and humbly serve the lowest. The law of finding life by losing it is there because in a body where it never can be well with any unless it is well with all, we must care about the whole. And faith in the spiritual unity of the world, no haphazard mechanistic accident but a spiritual organism with divine purpose running through it to make here one common family of God, even that high faith is there.

Indeed, if one were to select from the New Testament a passage most unashamedly idealistic, rising even into lyric song, could one do better than select the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians? From its beginning to its end, if anything in the New Testament is idealistic, that is. But the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is only the logical continuation

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of the twelfth, and the heart of the twelfth is this factual summary of life: we are one body—mark it!—not *ought* to be one body, *are* one body. And, says Paul, because that is the basic fact about life, love is life's basic law. To be sure, Paul was here addressing the Christian church but his words are equally cogent when applied to modern civilization.

All this is no Alice in Wonderland. In the light of the present crisis I do not even think it a lovely fact. It is a terrific fact against which our mad civilization has now smashed itself. In the light of this, then, let us think of some disillusioned and discouraged things which all of us are tempted to say to ourselves. It takes no clairvoyance to see the kind of moods which commonly assail us.

For example, we are tempted to say that this is a world where selfishness rules—to which I answer, It certainly is not. This is a world where in the long run selfishness fails, and if we will not learn that in advance we have to learn it afterward in catastrophe.

In 1857, for example, Macaulay, the English historian, wrote to an American as follows:

Either some Cæsar or Napoleon will seize the reins of government with a strong hand; or your Republic will be as fearfully plundered and laid waste by barbarians in the twentieth century as the Roman Empire was in the fifth;—with this difference, that the Huns and Vandals who ravaged the Roman Empire came from without, and that your Huns and Vandals will have been engendered within your own country by your own institutions.

No Hebrew prophet was ever nearer right in a prediction. We are plundered by our Huns and Vandals, a criminal class so powerful that in one of our largest cities, we are told, the citizens pay to racketeers toll comparable to the cost of the city's government.

Consider a single strand of history behind that. In Poland, sociologists, investigating the sources of our immigration, studied villages such as those from which the great Polish colony in Chicago had chiefly come. In those villages there

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was little delinquency. The people were solid, sturdy, industrious folk. In the days of our unreason, when our gates were open wide to limitless immigration, they poured in and settled in Chicago. We let them live in tenements that common decency should have forbidden. We did not care. We let them lose their old cultural restraints without getting new ones. We did not care. We hired them for the lowest wages we could pay, used them like things to build our industries. We had not asked them to come; if they came let them attend to themselves! We did not care. They were good human stock, they and their children. We did not care. And so the Polish gangs of Chicago became a terror to the city and a cause of amazement to the world. This is not a world where selfishness rules. This is a world where selfishness ruins.

This earth is much more moral than we commonly suppose. The coöperative have a better chance of permanence in the long run than the selfish. The shores of history are strewn with the wrecks of mighty institutions which, becoming selfish and so ceasing to be useful to the general body of the people, with all their power could not sustain themselves. Absolute monarchy with armies and navies behind it, slavery with a whole economic system founded on it, social systems like feudalism, great empires bestriding the world, ecclesiastical establishments that seemed to hold the souls of the people in a hopeless thrall—how long the list of those powerful institutions that, ceasing to be useful, perished!

Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Again, it requires no clairvoyance to perceive how common is the temptation to feel that this is a world where every man must be for himself:

Because the good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

Again I answer, It certainly is not. This is a world where

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in the long run we never can keep for ourselves anything which most we love unless we share it with the whole body of the people.

We want health for ourselves and our families. Then we must share it with all the people. Epidemics know no boundary lines and scarlet fever is no respecter of social classes. There is no assurance of health for any one save as assurance of health is shared with every one. That principle everywhere applies and ever more clearly as our modern society evolves. Once I might have had a well in my backyard and had clean water for myself alone but now my well is the city waterworks and if any one is to have good water every one must have it. Once I could have kept my money for myself in an old stocking. Now my old stocking is a bank and if any one is to have safe banking every one must have it. Once I could have clad myself in armor, which common folk could not afford, and as a well-acquainted knight defended myself, but now the individual's defense must be an adequate police force and if any one is to have it every one must share it. For this is a law of life: we never can possess unless we share.

The present economic crisis has put that in raised letters for all the world to see. Behind the natural divergencies of opinion as to the cause and cure of our catastrophe, there is among competent schools of thought a clear agreement on one point: we thought that we could make more money for ourselves by producing more goods to sell, and so we went on building more factories to sell more goods to make more money for ourselves, and all the time we kept forgetting that, if we were going to make more money for ourselves by selling more and more goods, the whole body of the population must be more and more able to buy them. So, forgetting *that* in our thirst for profit, we practised mass production without providing mass consumption.

In the *Monthly Survey of Business*, quoted by so thoughtful an economist as Dr. Slichter in so conservative a journal as the *Atlantic Monthly*, we are told that in the years 1928-30 the disbursed dividends of American corporations rose sixty-five per cent so that in 1930, despite the financial crisis of

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1929, the disbursement of dividends of American corporations was the largest in the nation's history. Meanwhile, the wages of American workingmen were going down. Dividends up sixty-five per cent in two years, wages down nineteen per cent in one year, '29-30! So Mr. Frank Vanderlip, the banker, we are told, not likely to exaggerate a criticism of the capitalist economy, put it: "Capital kept too much and labor did not have enough to buy its share of things."

In a congregation like this, where many are financially fortunate, we need to disabuse our minds of the commonly believed untruth that during the so-called years of our prosperity, when dividends were going up, wages everywhere were correspondingly rising. To be sure, in some areas they were rising. It is true that in the United States a larger proportion of the people have shared in the general affluence and have attained a higher standard of physical comfort than ever was true elsewhere in all history. There is, however, an obverse side to that picture. Indeed, Dr. Willford King asserts that in the years 1923-28, when the profits from investments were going up, the average annual manufacturing worker's wage was reduced \$55 and from 1922 to 1927 the average miner's wage dropped \$184. Some wages did go up, especially in industries where labor unions happened to be strong, but even in the heyday of our national wealth twenty million of our people were living at the minimum level of health and efficiency. Consider the facts concerning our American family incomes in 1930:

Craesus level: \$50,000 a year and upwards; .125% of our population.

Super-Liberal level: \$25,000 to \$50,000; .268% of our population.

Well-to-do level: \$10,000 to \$25,000; 1.08% of our population.

Liberal level: \$5,000 to \$10,000; 3.58% of our population.

Moderate level: \$3,000 to \$5,000; 8.92% of our population.

Comfortable level: \$2,000 to \$3,000; 7.154% of our population.

Minimum Comfort level: \$1,500 to \$2,000; 35.37% of our population.

Subsistence level: \$1,000 to \$1,500; 22.76% of our population.

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Bare Subsistence level: \$500 to \$1,000; 13.93% of our population.
Poverty level: below \$500; 6.78% of our population.

No wonder Christine Frederick, the compiler of this estimate, wrote: "We should be rendered thoughtful, not to say startled, to realize from these statistics that 70 per cent, or over two-thirds of our population, even before the depression, lived below the recognized American standard of common decency and minimum comfort, that is, below \$2,000 a year." And so, at last, because we tried to keep prosperity without adequately sharing it, we lost it.

Many today are anxious about the revolutionary radicalism which is afoot. For my part, I am astonished that there is so little of it. How can there be so little of it? In one of those pathetic shanty towns, built by the unemployed from the odds and ends of the city's refuse, I saw one evening an amazing scene. In the midst of the dilapidated settlement of huts there stood a flagstaff and as the sun sank a bugle played and the frayed-out, disinherited inhabitants, standing in line, gave the national colors an evening salute. My word! I wonder if I should have felt like saluting the flag, had I been in their place.

Be sure that the conflict between conservative and radical opinions on economics will not be decided by intellectual debate. It will be decided by something much more practical and matter of fact. If our present economic system can be reformed, transformed, and managed so that we can share with all the body of the people security of employment, decent livelihood, fair opportunities for the children, open doors for personal and family fulfilment, then we can keep our economic system. But if not, there is nothing on earth that can save it and nothing in heaven that will try to. Once more, we cannot possess unless we share.

Again, it takes no clairvoyance to see another thing that all of us are tempted to say to ourselves. This is an unruly world, we say. Illwill and violence are dominant and all we can expect from goodwill is that it shall be an occasional, lovely decoration on a bad business, like flowers growing in a

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swamp. To this I answer: The world is not unruly but law-abiding morally as it is physically, and what is unruly here is not the structure of the world, which is secure enough, but people who, transgressing the basic laws of life, plunge themselves into an earthly hell and then foolishly talk about goodwill and kindred virtues as visionary ideals. Since when has goodwill been merely a beautiful ideal? It is not that in a home. Goodwill is the foundation and essential structure of a home. No goodwill, no home. It is no mere ideal in school. Effective education in an atmosphere of illwill is a psychological impossibility. No goodwill, no school. Goodwill is no mere decoration in a city like this. Look at this community—Jews, Catholics, Protestants, more Italians than there are in Rome, more Germans than there are in Breslau, at last accounts about thirty-five different language newspapers here. In such a city illwill is like a leak in a ship's hull and the only thing that keeps us afloat at all is such goodwill as we have managed to possess.

I grow weary of hearing the teachings of our Lord called idealistic. The basic teachings of Jesus are no more idealistic in the ordinary meaning of that word than are the discoveries of scientists about the laws of health or the basic conditions of successful locomotion.

Does some one, for example, think it beautifully ideal to care for the lowliest and the least as Jesus did? "Inasmuch as ye did it," he said, "unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." How beautiful! we say. Beautiful? Let Charles Dickens tell us how beautiful it is. Why, asked Dickens in effect, should the rich man care about such slums as "Tom-All-Alone"? and he answers, "There is not an atom of Tom's slime, not a cubic inch of any pestilential gas in which he lives, not one obscenity or degradation about him, not an ignorance, not a wickedness, not a brutality of his committing, but shall work its retribution, through every order of society, up to the proudest of the proud, and to the highest of the high."

We ministers are often asked by the welfare agencies to appeal to our congregations on behalf of little children. We

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are asked to say that in these times, with multitudinous demands on generosity, we should not forget those organizations that help children, protect children, stand like barricades between the nation's childhood and the physical and moral consequences of our catastrophe. Is that idealistic? Rather, that is a basic law of social life without which there is no hope for the future. Any nation which in an emergency destroys its seed corn is doomed. Fools if we let the least of the children be hurt! Fools that in our prosperous years we allowed thousands of them to be worked out in our factories!

The golf links lie so near the mill
That almost every day
The laboring children can look out
And see the men at play.

That is not so much a sin against ideals as a transgression of a basic social law. Listen to Lord Asquith: "The test of every civilisation is the point below which the weakest and most unfortunate are allowed to fall."

As for international and interracial relationships, this has been said so often that I fail to see how any one can mistake the truth. Goodwill a superficial decoration on international relationships when because of its lack we saw millions of young men slaughtered in a single war? Goodwill merely a beautiful ideal when, because we transgressed it, we have lived for twenty years in a shaken world? Goodwill Alice in Wonderland when every day new communications bind all humanity into an organic whole?

Do not let these reactionaries with their faces turned backward, still thinking in terms of an isolated nationalism and an isolated economic life behind towering barriers, deceive you. They are not such hard-headed realists as they think they are. The realistic fact is that our isolated nationalism and our towering tariff walls, inviting antagonistic tariff walls against us, have well-nigh destroyed us. Mr. Walter Lippmann is at least so far right that we cannot leave the world politically in chaos, as though it were not even enough of our affair to go into the World Court, and then expect to lend

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huge sums to that chaotic world and make huge investments in it and get them back again. We cannot expect to erect towering walls against foreign trade and then expect foreign debts to be paid or foreign trade itself, on whose return our prosperity so considerably depends, to flow back to us again. For weal or woe we are one body and severally members one of another. If that were only an ideal, how much easier the situation would become! The trouble is that it is a terrific fact.

In 1897 a militarist wrote this: "If Germany were extinguished to-morrow, the day after to-morrow there is not an Englishman in the world who would not be the richer." Think of that! That was said by a man outside of an insane asylum. It was not only said but was sent to the *Saturday Review* and they published it. Since then we have had a war and Germany was defeated. It almost ruined England. The level of British prosperity would now immediately rise if German markets could come back again. Abolish New York State and the next day every citizen of Massachusetts will be richer—what imbecility! For the basic factor in modern economic life is consumers, which means that it never can be ultimately well with any one until it is well with every one.

Whether or not you agree with all the illustrations I have used to make my meaning plain, the major thing we are driving at should be clear. In Christian truth we are dealing with something much more profound and serious than lovely idealism.

Our forefathers had a firmer grasp on this than we moderns have displayed. When one listens to the soft, comfortable poetry of our conventional pulpits, one thinks of ancient figures and rejoices in them: some John Knox braving the wrath of Mary, Queen of Scots, and dinging his Edinburgh pulpit into blads as he turned upside down his country's spiritual life. To be sure, forms of thought have radically changed between those times and these, yet what those old prophets said to their day and would say to ours is true: Ours is a world of moral law; the foundations of the earth

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are laid in righteousness; no nation and no civilization can survive disobedience to the structural conditions of its peace.

As for the personal issue of this matter, it is plain that being a Christian is a greater business than most Christians have supposed. We all have met the kind of man who got far enough into the army to have some insignia of rank and, who never having seen any service or done any serious business in war, now on all possible occasions displays his insignia and accouterments. Some one said about such a soldier that his entire military experience consisted in being emotionally thrilled by reading "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

There are Christians like that. They have been emotionally thrilled reading the lovely story of Christ and his idealistic teachings. Such Christianity is not Christian enough. We are living in a civilization shaken to its foundations and only one kind of mind and character can save it: that, namely, which starts with the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians as a fact and moves through it into the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians as a consequence and lives there in personal and social attitudes. That is being a Christian indeed.

*The Intimations of Immortality**

IT IS a devastating experience all of a sudden to need faith in immortality and not be able to find it. Some man who never has thought much about death and what lies after it, abruptly runs into death. Suddenly death steps into his home and takes away the best-loved personality there. At once he begins to want to know about immortality. What is it like? No one can tell him. What are the proofs? No one can prove it. There he stands suddenly faced with the most certain of all earthly facts—death—trying to make a head-long attack upon the mystery of it and what lies after it, and all in vain.

Because so many face that experience, and because hundreds of you here may be walking straight into it, I wanted this Easter morning to speak about it. That kind of experience springs from some of the most characteristic attitudes of our time.

For one thing, thoughtlessness about death. One American literary critic, indeed, has published as an item in his creed, "Never allow one's self even a passing thought of death." That is a modern attitude which would have scandalized our forefathers, who alike in religion and philosophy meditated long and deeply on death. Now in centering our interest on life, not death, we all are modern, but it is sheer stupidity to be so modern that, like the American literary critic, we fall into pretending that death is not here. It is here, most certainly and unescapably here, and if not now, then some day, what we think about it, our inner attitude toward it, the way we face it, will be the determining factor in our lives.

There is, however, a second attitude characteristic of our time causing many to think they need not bother about death. I am not interested, they say, in what may lie after death. Very probably nothing does. I am quite content if that is so.

*An Easter Sermon.

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I simply do not care. Death may be the end of us, and if so, very well, or if not, I'll face that when it comes—laissez-faire! One can easily see of whose death that man is thinking. He is thinking of his own. He is not an egoist; he does not suppose that the success of the universe depends upon his own perpetuation; he feels no greedy clamoring to have his ego go on forever. He pictures himself standing beside his own grave, saying, If that is the end of you, very well!

I too can do that about myself, but to try to do that about somebody else whom I profoundly love and value is another matter. What started Tennyson struggling with the problem of immortality in "In Memoriam"? Not his own prospective death; no, the actual death of his friend, Arthur Hallam. Picture Tennyson, then, before the grave of Arthur Hallam, trying to say, If that is the end of you, all right; for all I know or care you are finished; I am not interested. He could not say that. No friend could say that.

I am sure, therefore, that some of you who think yourselves very modern, nonchalant about death and what lies after it, may some day run abruptly into an experience which will shake you to the depths. Somebody whom you love, the most priceless soul, it may be, you ever have loved, will die, and you will find that you cannot say that you are not interested, do not care, that it makes no difference to you what lies beyond death for that personality.

Indeed, what is the significance of Easter? Did it start with some disciples who were worried over what was going to happen to them after they died? Rather, it started with devoted men and women who had fallen under the fascinating spell of a soul in whom it seemed to them the life of God himself was visibly made manifest and whom they saw done to death on Calvary. They could not stand by his tomb saying, For all we know or care that is the end of you; we are not interested; laissez-faire. They might have said that about themselves, not about him. If a soul like that could die and death be the end, that fact would reveal something tremendously important about the whole universe. Of course it would!

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In consequence of this human fact an experience arises with which every minister is familiar. Somebody who was trying to be nonchalant about death runs straight into death, the death of a loved friend. How desperately interested in death he now becomes! He reads everything, talks with everybody; he cannot get his mind off the question; he turns from one resource to another, and may even try theosophy or spiritualism. He wants to know what lies beyond death—no one can tell him. He wants proof—no one can give it. How futile his efforts seem!

The secret of that man's trouble is as plain as a pikestaff, but multitudes of moderns are missing it. No one can single out the idea of immortality as a problem by itself alone, and successfully make a direct assault on that. Great ideas come in families. If we will not take in the whole family, we are sure to have trouble entertaining a special member of it. That is true in science. Pick out some single problem like the rings of Saturn, and suppose that, having in your mind the family of ideas belonging to the old astronomy, you try to get a satisfactory scientific idea of this one particular item. You cannot do that. A satisfactory scientific idea of the rings of Saturn involves the whole family of ideas belonging to the new astronomy. If we refuse to take in that entire group of ideas, we cannot single out one member of the group and successfully understand it. In all realms of thought great ideas are clannish. They cohere in groups. They live together in families.

Now, the idea of immortality belongs in a great family—the noblest household of conceptions that man's mind ever has entertained. If a man's mind be preoccupied with a household of antagonistic thoughts, the hope of immortal life cannot come in. On the other hand, some of us cannot disbelieve immortality. We have tried. We know the difficulties that beset belief. Often we have rehearsed the arguments against eternal life. But always when we look into our minds there still is the assurance that death is an open door. And the reason is plain: it is one of a family. All the rest of its household are in our heads, so *that* member of the household

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stays there too. We cannot get rid of the idea without turning out of doors all its relatives. And we cannot do that. Its relatives are the noblest group of ideas about life that the mind of man has ever entertained.

Let me introduce them to you this Easter morning—not argue about them, just introduce them—the great family to which the hope of life eternal belongs.

First, the supreme value and endless possibilities of personality. Here we are, personal beings aware of ourselves, which no mere thing ever is, and so able consciously and deliberately to do things with ourselves, possessing powers also which only personality possesses—thinking, loving, purposing. It does look as though more could be done with personality than with anything besides. In intellect, character, and creative purposefulness, the universe has struck a road to the conceivable possibilities of which there is no end.

It will not do to minimize this impression by saying that the cosmos is very great and personalities are small. The fact that the physical cosmos is vast does not, as so many seem to think, depress personality at all. Upon the contrary, this vast universe which we know is known within the mind, and, my friends, the knowing mind which grasps the universe is more marvelous than the universe it grasps. Here is the real miracle, this godlike, knowing mind which thus can throw the meshes of its understanding thought around Orion and the Pleiades. To what may be done with that, if it does go on and on, there are no limits!

Nor will it do to minimize this impression by saying that personalities are merely physical. Of course, they are now dependent on and intimately intertwined with the body. But that does not belittle personality. Indeed, the marvel lies in watching personality, both in the evolution of the race and in individuals whom we know, rise up out of the body, tower above the body, turn upon and control the body, do amazing, creative things both with and despite the body, until it gets through with the body. Nothing that science knows, as many a scientist has said, prevents the possibility that the body may be like a scaffolding upon which we are now dependent, but

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within which the personal powers—intellect, purposefulness, goodwill—are built, so that at last, the scaffolding taken down, personality may still persist.

It is in practical life that the real meaning of this idea becomes fully apparent. You all know Mount Marcy, the highest mountain in New York State. Who was Marcy? William Marcy in his youth was regarded by all his neighbors as the worst boy in town. William Marcy and his gang, one winter, drove the school-teacher out of Southbridge, Massachusetts. Then the school board brought in another teacher, named Salem Towne, and all the neighborhood stood by to see who would win, Salem Towne or Bill Marcy. Let us shift the scenery rapidly. The years have passed now, and the Governor of Massachusetts is giving a reception to the Honorable William L. Marcy, and the old school-teacher, Salem Towne, is there. When the two men affectionately greeted, the Governor said, "Do you men know each other?" And the Honorable William Marcy said: "That is the man who made me. When I was a boy, everybody was against me; none, no, not even my own father and mother saw any good in me. He was the first who believed in me. . . . Whatever of merit or distinction I have attained to I owe to him more than to any other living person." Well, Marcy was United States Senator, three times Governor of this state, Secretary of State of the Union; when he died they say there were 100,000 persons in his funeral procession and in the throng that filled the streets; and they named the highest mountain in the state after him. Yet it all went back to somebody who believed in the possibilities of personality. Now, I do not know anything in detail about Salem Towne's religious faith, but I should be astonished beyond measure if he did not believe in immortality. How can a man discover such values in personality and help to bring them out without suspecting that at last there are open doors ahead? Can it be that the Creator makes instruments with such capacity for music in them, on which the compositions of the masters can so gloriously be played, only to break them in the end?

Doubtless some one is saying, This does not prove im-

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mortality. Of course not. We are not trying to prove immortality. No one can prove immortality. What we are saying is simply that the idea of immortality belongs to a great family of ideas—the noblest family of ideas, I think, that man's mind has ever entertained—and this is one of them: the sacredness and value and infinite possibilities of personality.

Another member of this family is the idea that human life as a whole is a great adventure, with open doors ahead of it. In all our best hours it feels that way. As William James put it, life "*feels* like a real fight,—as if there were something really wild in the universe which we, with all our idealities and faithfulnesses, are needed to redeem." In the nature of the case that cannot be proved. How can we prove a victory before it is won?

There is another family of ideas altogether in which human life, as a whole, is not conceived as a great adventure and in which there are ultimately no open doors ahead. I remember yet that sobering hour when first I ran headlong into the fact that some day this earth will be as uninhabitable as the moon. Many a train ride between New York and Boston has been forgotten but that one stands clearly out, because then I read a lecture by a great astronomer, describing the various ways in one of which this planet would come to its final end as a human residence. That was years ago. Now every well-informed person is aware that science expects the earth to become uninhabitable at some future time, and the thought of it has fallen like a pall on multitudes of minds. Some day, they say, we shall all be dead, our children all dead, their children all dead; all we have willed, or hoped, or dreamed of good will be destroyed on this extinct volcano of a planet; and everything will be as though nothing ever had been at all. That is an idea, and it belongs to a large family.

As to what is at stake in that, let a philosopher, Professor Montague of Columbia University, tell us. No one ever put the truth more clearly, or concisely: "whether the things we care for most are at the mercy of the things we care for least." That is the main issue. There are things we care for most.

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Intellectual achievement—how worth while that seems, and what open doors appear to be ahead of it! *Power to create beauty*, such as belonged to Beethoven, concerning whom his biographer says that all one year of marvelous productivity he “had no time to live outside the kingdom of heaven that was within him.” *Social causes* determining the welfare of multitudes of people. *Love*, which we may deface but which, when it is beautiful, is, as the New Testament teaches, God himself within us. There are things we do care for most.

Then the family of ideas comes along which says that all these things we care for most are ultimately at the mercy of the things we care for least—death a blind alley to the individual; no way through—what we care for most in him at the mercy of what we care for least! An extinct planet a blind alley for the whole human race; no way through—what we care for most in the world at the mercy of what we care for least! Everywhere, at last, closed doors, red lights, nothing but red lights! No way through! That involves a whole family of ideas.

Has some stranger come here this morning, not belonging to the Christian faith and tradition, to see what Easter means to us? Grasp this, at least, that Easter stands in our thinking for another family of thoughts altogether from those we have just been speaking of. It means open doors, a universe not of blind alleys but of open doors. It looks to us like that even now. We think it always will turn out to be that way. Granted death seems to the individual like a red light; red lights can turn to green. You will see, *you can go through*. So, even if the planet does become uninhabitable, that is not a blind alley even for the race, for the gains of earth are registered in the abiding spiritual life of personalities who can go on. That, too, as you observe, involves a whole family of ideas.

What would be the matter with a world in which all that we cared for most was at the mercy of what we cared for least? In the end it would be as flat as a pancake and as dull as dishwater. That would be the matter. Many people think that even intelligent Christians want to believe in immortality

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because they wish sentimental comfort. That is nonsense! The real trouble is that a universe of closed doors, where ultimately everything worth while ran into a blind alley, would be a deadly dull place. The wildness, the adventure, the excitement, the uncertainty and risks are squeezed out of such a final philosophy of life; there everything is a foregone conclusion; the dice are all loaded; all we care for most runs at last into a cul-de-sac; in the end there are no open doors.

Let a man's mind steadily and consistently entertain that family of ideas and how easy it is for him to look on all that we are trying to do on earth as futile! It is like a horse race in a theater. The horses strain and sweat. The drivers crack their whips and cry. But they are not really getting anywhere. It is simply the moving stage and the shifting scenery that make them seem to go. Nothing is really being done. It will not come out anywhere.

That philosophy of life is the very essence of the paganism from which Christianity, in the first place, sought to save the world. One of the foremost students in the field of ancient Greco-Roman life puts it this way: "The absence of any certainty that life has a permanent value is the canker at the heart of heathenism."

O my soul, be lifted up on Easter morning into a universe of open doors! The idea of life after death is not a solitary item. It is one of a great household. Is some one saying, These great ideas cannot be proved, life after death is not demonstrable, still it is uncertain? That ought not to disturb us. Consider: two times two equals four. That can be proved. Is it exciting? Not in the least. The velocity of light is about 186,000 miles a second. That can be proved. Is that exciting? Not at all. The things we can prove do not make life exciting. When we choose a vocation we cannot prove that it will succeed, and when we marry we cannot prove it will turn out well. But such things are exciting. All the most thrilling things in life are the uncertainties. We cannot prove we can end war or that we can build a decent economic order. That's where the adventure enters—the thrill of living. We move toward open doors we are convinced are there but through

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which as yet we cannot see. So death is the most exciting adventure in life, if into it we carry the great family of Christian ideas.

Once more, the most important member of this family, of course, is trust in God. One hesitates to use the phrase. It has been abominably misused. To many people it suggests an expectation that God will make pets of us, treat us as favorites. But God never does that for anybody, no matter how much a man trusts him. Jesus trusted God. Did that keep him from the cross? Paul trusted God. Did that prevent his martyrdom?

Put it this way: You scientists trust nature. With utter conviction you believe in the reliability, the regularity, the unwavering sequence of the processes of nature. That does not mean that you expect nature to make pets of you. That is precisely what you do not expect. You expect from nature an invariable regularity of procedure. That is the basis of all your work and of the amazing inferences you draw about undiscovered things from things you have discovered. You think that nature will not lie to you.

Now, some of us do not confine that attitude to the physical world. We think that the spiritual world also will not lie to us. We trust God. We think this universe is in faithful hands, a bank that will not break, a moral order that will not deceive us. When we believe in immortality, it is a corollary of our faith in the living God.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

As you see, when such ideas live together in a man's mind—a living God, a universe surrounded with open doors, the endless possibilities of personality—you cannot keep the idea of immortality away. It belongs to that family.

This last winter our friend and neighbor, Dr. McBain, Dean of the Graduate Faculties of Columbia University, made at the University Commemoration Service an address

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on immortality which has received wide attention and publicity. One of the most interesting things about that address was the long list of people with whom Dr. McBain disagreed about immortality. He disagreed with Spinoza and Santayana, with Plato and Dean Inge, with Emerson and Renan, with the fundamentalists and the modernists. He could not make head or tail out of anybody who believed in immortality in any form or thought it made much difference whether or not one believed in it. Reading this address, one sees that it would be useless to discuss with Dr. McBain the idea of immortality by itself. The real issue lies deeper. He has in his head a whole family of ideas which make the admission of the idea of immortality impossible: no God, except what he calls "the universal mystery"; the universe not the work of a reasonable being; and as for the ultimate meaning of life, we probably, he says, are all "snowflakes upon a river." Well, with that group of ideas, of course, one cannot believe in immortality and there is no use arguing. As one of my wise colleagues puts it, "The denial of immortality always seems to me to be more disquieting for what it is a sign of than for what it is in itself." Just so! The denial of immortality is a sign of a whole family of materialistic ideas.

If, then, when death comes into our experience we wish to be prepared for it, unafraid of it, full of hope about its issue, we must do more than think about immortality alone. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and let the whole Easter family of ideas come in! Above all, personalize the matter: let Christ come in, who in his thought and life incarnated this great family of faith and concerning whom all Christendom is singing today. He is not dead. He is alive forevermore.

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